



Cult of the Sacred Runes

Chapters 161 - 200

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Chapter 161 – A Young Runemaster's Past

‘So, now you know that the Prime Dragon ridge is located on the North Hill Bay, what are you going to do? Do you even know where to start searching for the treasures? The Draketail is over ten kilometers long, and the Draketorsal is around a thousand kilometers long. Without my help, searching for a ten meters long and wide Drakehead in the wide terrain of North Hill Bay is like searching for a needle in a haystack!’

‘Besides, you don’t even know what a Drakehead looks like. You might even step on it and never know that it’s right under your feet!’

‘Now, if you kneel obediently, boy, and proclaim me the greatest Progenitor, I might be merciful enough to tell you how to find the Drakehead.’ The demon chuckled. He definitely had an edge up on Ye Wei this time since he possessed the knowledge the young Runemaster desired so badly. His real intention, however, was hidden from Ye Wei’s mind. He wasn’t going to give him any information at all, even if Ye Wei bowed and kneeled a thousand times.

‘Do you think I am stupid enough, old piece of scale, to believe your filthy lies?!’ Ye Wei disdainfully replied.

‘This Prime Dragon ridge contains my family’s fortune. Of course, it would be nice to claim it but I have standards. Why would I trade with you? I would not deserve the treasures if I betray my morals for it!’

‘The Lu’s don’t even know where to search for it, and I assume all they know was that the Ye Supreme died somewhere close to Green Moon City. With only that to work on, even if they had twenty thousand men to order around, they still would have no way of finding the Drakehead. I would be able to find the first treasure before them. All I need are some clues.’ Concerned, Ye Wei was hoping for Lu’s men to spend more time further away from North Hill Bay. ‘The more time they spend away from here, the more time there is for me to look around freely!’

‘If the Lu family is lucky enough, they might be able to find the Dragon’s ridge treasure in less than three years time.’ Ye Wei approximated how much time it would take for the Lu’s troops to get to North Hill Bay. He guessed from the information the Ye’s scouts reported that the search team was reaching outwards from the center of Green Moon City.

Lu family acted smart. They didn’t send their own troops to Green Moon City, instead they were being cautious and sly by controlling the martial families of the city and use their resources to search for the treasures; thus, other rivaling families in the region would not be alarmed.

Another advantage of such devious methods was the Lu’s did not have to spend their resources on the search. If they were lucky enough to find the Drakehead in a decade, the only losers would be the martial families in Green Moon City. The Green Moon city’s martial families would have wasted all the efforts and resources and would not even get a share of the treasure. On the other hand, the Lu’s, having control over the Supreme Dragon ridge’s treasures, would become a superpower, even rivaling Zhou dynasty’s three royal families.

‘I sense some strong disturbances originating from a distant. I guess it doesn’t hurt to try.’ Ye Wei thought as he sat in the lotus position. He gently closed his eyes and started to absorb primal energy using his Falling Star Formula, tried to figure out the precise direction where the energy came from.

While the energy was going through his meridians, suddenly a runic lotus slowly appeared between his brow without his notice. He did not realize the Combat Master left him the lotus.

Without Ye Wei knowing, the effect of his Falling Star Form was amplified and acted as an antenna. The pull of his formula reached further with the lotus at the vortex’s center. The vortex was grew and spun slowly.

Before, the Falling Star Form was only a cultivating formula, but, now,

it was reacting to the small energy disturbances of the Supreme Dragon ridge with the aid of the golden lotus.

‘Ehm?’ Ye Wei suddenly opened his eyes and curiously looked to the left. ‘There is an energy surge coming from that direction.’

The Supreme Dragon ridge was a Ye’s flesh and bones, and the Falling Star From was also created centuries ago by a powerful Ye. Although the disturbance was minimal due to the distance it originated from, it somehow resonated with the technique Ye Wei used.

“The Supreme Dragon ridge might be left by my ancestor, and I was using our family’s formula. People always said ancestral land is the best place to cultivate.” Ye Wei uttered to himself. He stood up abruptly, thinking, he might be onto something.

Ye Wei, slightly shaking under the night breeze, leaped to his left hand side and sat down again a few hundred meters. He sat down again and activated the Falling Star Formula. He felt a slight disturbance in the air and on the ground around him.

‘The power of the disturbance seems to be stronger at this spot!’

Ye Wei smiled and opened his eyes.

In the faint moonlight, Ye Wei started to follow the trace of energy, kept himself on the move, sat down every hundred feet and utilizing the Formula to investigate, to be able to sense the directions of the strange energy’s source.

‘This kid won’t find anything! Absolutely no one is capable of detecting the energy fluctuation of a Supreme Dragon ridge!’ The Progenitor thought. ‘The Dragon ridges’ energy disturbance is very subtle; it is utterly impossible even under the god’s prime cultivation to be able to sense it.’

Ye Wei moved slowly but methodically. He followed the energy trace and got closer and closer towards the Drakehead. Though he did not know he was heading in the right direction, but the demon in his head did.

The Progenitor became more surprised. Although Ye Wei was still far from the Drakehead, with each of Ye Wei's stops, it became apparent to the ancient demon that he was being brought closer and closer to the exact spot where the Supreme died.

Six hours had passed; the sun rose over the horizon, and the sky slowly lit up golden pink. The Progenitor was flabbergasted by Ye Wei's progress, and how Ye Wei could actually feel that the energy of the Drakehead was now only ten kilometers away.

'With such speed and determination this kid will reach the Drakehead in less than two hours.'

'How can this be possible?!' The demon was terribly shocked, 'How can this kid sense the energy of the Dragon ridge from so far away?!'

What the Progenitor didn't know was that the Supreme's blood deep within the mountains was resonating energy through the Dragon's ridge, guiding and aiding Ye Wei in his quest.

His ancestors' blood was also in Ye Wei's veins. Although the blood's power had been diluted through time and generations, it was recognised and respected by the land itself. Now, it was amplified by the Combat Master's gift and the original Falling Star Form.

'The energy fluctuation is getting stronger. I can almost feel the power of this land boiling under my feet!' Ye Wei had no clue how shocked the demon was, but he was happy that the demon kept himself quite. He didn't need any distractions now; instead, he needed to execute precise detective work.

"If my theory is right, judging by the energy I sense, the Drakehead is not very far away from here!" Proclaimed, Ye Wei who looked enthusiastically at the rising sun.

"I shall carry on!"

It was becoming easier and easier to follow the energy as Ye Wei became closer and closer to the source.

Meanwhile, ten kilometers away, Lu Feng slowly opened his eyes. He sat on the side of a hundred meter wide pond in the lotus position.

“With this speed, I shall breakthrough to a five-star condensed prime Warrior sooner than anyone would expect! Lu Feng smiled. Satisfied, he stood up and looked up at the sky.

“This place is mine; I don’t care if I am one of the Lu’s.” He told himself.

“Mom, just wait a little longer. Give me three years, and when I become more influential and powerful, I will make the Lu’s pay for the humiliation they made you endure! I will make them suffer ten, no, a hundred times worse than what they made you go through!” Lu Feng’s gaze turned evil. He stomped the ground and became a flash of light. He headed straight to Green Moon City.

Five years ago, when Lu Feng found out that he was a bastard, he felt ashamed and closed himself up.

That very evening, he learned the truth regarding his past and his heritage. He ran out into the rain into the wilderness that was north of Green Moon City.

He wandered alone into the forests and ended up at a pond close to North Hill Bay. Here, he cried the whole evening to let out his frustration. The moonlight and heavy drops of rain were his only company.

Lu Feng found comfort in the company of the peaceful nature, ever since then, he found comfort in habitually came to the forest, to the wilderland of North Hill Bay. Whenever he felt down or bullied or mocked because of his identity, he came here.

He began to meditate and cultivate by the pond. The more time he spent by the pond the more he noticed that he was cultivating quicker than his usual speed. That’s when he decided to cultivate at the spot whenever he got the time to.

He was able to come by the pond everyday to cultivate. Day after day,

year after year, Lu Feng had been training by the Drakehead for five whole years.

Lu Feng then did some research. Although he had no luck in finding out exactly what was so special about the pond, he was not going to share this special piece of land with anyone else. Thus, he used his influence as a Runemaster's apprentice, looked to take over North Hill Bay.

'The Ye's are getting stronger, and the Lu's have surely stumbled upon some history records regarding this place.' Lu Feng speculated, 'I have to be extra careful and cover my tracks well. Hopefully, I will be able to somehow distract them and drive them away from this pond.'

Chapter 162 – Cultivate

Not long after Lu Feng's departure, a figure flew past the woods and appeared right next to the pond.

"This should be it." The warm morning sunlight kissed Ye Wei on his cheeks. He panted for air and stared at the small pool of water. A glimmer of joy shone from his eyes, as his heart raced.

'If I train next to the Drakehead, my cultivating speed will increase ten times quicker!' Ye Wei, still excited, remembered what he had read about the Supreme Dragon Ridge.

"More than ten times the speed, so, if I stay here to train and cultivate for the next two weeks... No, not even that! If I train here for the next ten days, I will surely breakthrough to a four-star condensed prime Warrior!" Ye Wei explained to himself.

He clenched his fists tightly. Although he knew there was no time to waste, he was, nonetheless, too excited to even move.

'This will be the perfect proof! Under normal circumstances, with my talent, even with no shortage of resources, it would take me more than four months to breakthrough as of now. However, I will see very soon if this place really is what I think it is!'

The Progenitor saw all of it through Ye Wei's eyes, confused, shocked, and a little angered Ye Wei was able to find the Drakehead so effortlessly. 'It can't be luck. There is no luck on earth that can lead a man to a Drakehead just in one night!'

'What else is this kid hiding? He must have some secret methods. Secrets that could benefit even me!' The Progenitor had no idea that the Supreme's blood flowed in Ye Wei's veins, and that Ye Wei subconsciously used the Supreme's formula.

'Kid, how did you find this place?' The Progenitor was insatiably

curious. He had never witnessed such effective detective work.

‘Go on, tell me. I will even reward you with a Sky stance. We can even do a heavenly oath; I promise. I will not cheat you in any way!’ The Black Scale Progenitor was one of the most powerful beings. It was a rarity something interested him at all. However, with Ye Wei, the Progenitor was willing to gift a powerful creation of his own in exchange of as many of the boy’s secrets he could discover.

‘I do not care for your stupid stances! The fact that you want to know means that I am not going to tell!’ Ye Wei replied coldly, unmoved.

Ye Wei was obviously toying with the Progenitor. Although he was able to find the pond, he was far from knowledgeable enough to explain how his detection system’s intricate workings led him to where he was.

Ye Wei was just following the disturbance of Qi in the surrounding area and went to the direction where it felt the strongest. He did not know why and how the Drakehead’s Qi disturbance resonated with his own.

‘You disrespectful idiot! If you keep up with that attitude, I will tear you into pieces!’ The Progenitor became furious. ‘I am the origin of an entire demon clan! How dare you!’

‘Old dog, how many times have you told me that you were going to kill me? And, yet, I am still alive. Somehow I really doubt that you are capable of tearing me into pieces.’ Ye Wei rolled his eyes.

‘You.. you!’ The progenitor frustrated. It seemed luring clearly didn’t work, and he currently had no way of doing anything to his human host.

The Progenitor grunted angrily and went back to silence.

Ye Wei didn’t want to waste his time arguing either. He knew that cultivating was more important at that point, he needed to prove immediately that he was at the Drakehead and he would rather become stronger than to anger a consciousness in his Sentient by winning pointless arguments.

“Good luck finding this place. I will cultivate while your lot wastes the time on ordering people around aimlessly!” Ye Wei murmured to himself,

feeling angry that the Lu's decided to use the cultivators from Green Moon City as slave laborers. 'I am now one of the strongest cultivators of my family but if we want to keep the Dragon ridge within the family, I have to get stronger, I will have to defend this very spot from the possible intruders...'

The memory of Lu Ren and Lu De, two ten-star condensed prime Warrior threatening the Ye family, was still fresh in Ye Wei's mind. If he was strong enough to send the Lu's out of the mansion, he would have.

'If I was a returned prime Warrior, I could have driven the Lu's out of Green Moon City all together...' Ye Wei's eyes shone a determined glow.

'Be patient, I will become stronger, and I will do it quickly!'

'Falling Star Form!' Ye Wei bent his knees, sat next to the pond and adjusted his breathing. He cleared his mind and ran the Ye's formula entering a zen state.

As Ye Wei's Falling Star Formula accelerated to its full speed, dense surges of primal energy from the sky and the earth were drawn to him, absorbed into his body through the pores on his skin.

The raging primal energy circulated through Ye Wei's meridians a few times, the surges then were purified, stored into Ye Wei's dantian as pure and dense Qi. The three cracks on his dantian were pulsing, seemed to be excited to receive the condensed energy.

Ye Wei's cultivation was improving at incredible rate, as his dantian absorbed Qi at the speed he never before experienced.

The intensity of the Supreme Dragon ridge is not good for weaker cultivators. They normally had to slow down the surges before their body could absorb them, but Supreme who died there used the exact same formula Ye Wei was now using. The formula synergized with the Supreme blood in Ye Wei's veins, he was therefore able to absorb and convert the primal energy. Furthermore, Ye Wei's Qi had the qualities similar to the Supreme's, meaning that the energy was flowing smoothly inside his body.

Time flew without Ye Wei noticing, it was already the dead of night when he lifted his head and opened his eyes again. He was already seeing bright stars hung in the night sky. He took a deep breath, he could feel the atmosphere was heavier than usual because of the busy Qi flow around the area.

Ye Wei only spent one day cultivating at the place, what he thought was a Drakehead, and his dantian was already filled up.

As his dantian became full, there was little point to absorb any more energy before the Qi in his dantian had been consolidated.

‘This is certainly the Drakehead! It was only one day of cultivating and my dantian felt as full as if I have been cultivating continuously for half a month!’ Ye Wei’s excited eyes stared at the moon’s reflection on the pond’s calm surface. He slowly stretched his back and limbs.

‘The ancestral graveyard is close by. My ancestors must have established this area as the family’s resting place after the Supreme’s death!’ After muttering to himself, Ye Wei’s figure became a blur, ghostly under the pale moonlight. He leaped onto the tip of a tree erected next to the Drakehead pond and overlooked the terrain, the mountain range he knew like the back of his hand.

‘No Lu will take charge of this if I live. None of you will even get to know about this place under my watch, I swear. I, the kin of a Supreme has now officially rediscovered my ancestor’s treasure! It has been forgotten but it was nonetheless left here by a Ye and now it belongs to one!’ Ye Wei was infuriated just thinking about the Lu’s plots. ‘There is no time to waste...’ His foot pressed against the tree’s tip, rode the rebound of the tough tree trunk. Ye Wei launched his body back to Green Moon City’s direction, ready to return to the Ye mansion and plan the defence to detail.

Ye Wei was not going to interfere with the Lu’s search but now that he knew what was at stake and where the Drakehead was, he was not going to stand on the side while the Lu’s men wandered into North Hill Bay. Although it was unlikely for them to find the pond, he was still ready to

take precautions in order to avoid it from happening.

Ye Wei finally left the pond. Few hours passed before a dark figure slowly and carefully approached. The person hidden under the black robe was Lu Feng. Once again he came back to his favourite spot to cultivate, to become stronger, to get a little bit closer to his dream of avenging his mother.

Lu Feng was only twenty two years old and he already achieved more than any ordinary cultivator could even hope for. A two-star Runemaster, a four-star condensed prime Warrior, he was far ahead of everyone his age because of the exceptional effort he put into cultivating.

Cultivator's Qi is very limited and Lu Feng spent most of his Qi on learning more runes and more stances which contributed to his early rise as a Runemaster. This was without any doubts benefit of having discovered such powerful cultivation spot.

The fact that training efficiency was higher at the Drakehead meant that Lu Feng's great efforts were multiplied, which resulted in his cultivation level being more advanced than most of the cultivators his own age.

Lu Feng discovered the Drakehead out of pure coincidence, Ye Wei was guided here by his ancestors' blood, both of them found the point of interest but neither of them were aware the other's knowledge of the pond's power.

Next morning, one hundred and fifty men gathered at the Ye mansion. All of them Warriors, foundation of the Ye family.

The forests and mountains around Green Moon City were very dangerous. Often packs of wild beasts would attack and kill wanders who weren't careful enough to get away. In order to ensure his people's safety, Ye Zhengqing had his grandson, Ye Zhong, leading the force.

Ye Zhong was the strongest young cultivator in Green Moon City. At only twenty five, he was already a condensed prime Warrior.

Together with Ye Wei, he was one of the youngest people to achieve

condensed prime level in his family in the last century.

Since Ye Zhong achieved condensed prime level, his cultivation rate had slowed down a bit as cultivating would become harder the further one went. Taking into account his excellent talent, Ye Zhong was still far from breaking through to the two-star level. Even now that the Ye's were not short of resources, nobody expected him to become a two-star condensed prime Warrior in less than two years.

In the end, when it came to cultivating, resources were not everything. Sentient strength's importance accounted for more as it was directly proportional to how fast one could absorb, purify and consolidate primal energy.

Ironically the only way to strengthen one's Sentient was to cultivate.

"Zhong, these men are the family's elite, the family's foundation. Whatever happens in the wild, you are still these men's leader, you have to stay strong and consider their safety even under stress!" Ye Zhengqing patted his grandson on the shoulder and advised solemnly.

"Grandpa, please don't worry, I will not let our men put their lives at risk for the Lu's at any point of the expedition!" Ye Zhong nodded determinedly. His eyes lingered on the hundred and fifty cultivators and made sure everyone heard his words.

"Grandpa, I would like to go with cousin Zhong!" Ye Wei stepped forward and said out of the blue.

"You should stay here and keep cultivating," Ye Zhengqing hesitated, then shook his head, 'I am sorry Wei, but I can't have you both risking your lives...'

Ye Wei understood the patriarch's intentions, softened and did not bother arguing.

"Be safe!" Ye Zhengqing gave Ye Zhong a hug, then waved as the group headed off, "The beasts in the woods are just ordinary beasts. You have a condensed prime Warrior as a leader, and it's not just any condensed prime Warrior, it's me little Zhong, you should be fine...'

“Let’s go!”

Ye Zhong waved and turned around, leading one hundred and fifty strong men towards the city’s gate.

“Just as I thought the Ye family is becoming stronger and more respectable in the high society, the Lu’s show up... I hope the kids don’t blame me for making this hard decision...” It was difficult for Ye Zhengqing to see them leave. He sighed and slowly looked away.

Chapter 163 – Slippery

‘Considering cousin Zhong’s cultivation, the team shouldn’t have any problems, unless they get attacked by a rare wild beast...’ Ye Wei thought, while looking at Ye Zhong’s silhouette exiting the mansion’s gate, ‘But... It’s better to be safe than sorry!’

‘If I follow cousin Zhong, I might be able to spy on the Lu’s and find out what their plans are. Furthermore, I can put the matter of protecting my family into my own hands. Like grandpa said, they are the foundation of the family’s future and I just can’t leave anything to chance!’

Led by a ten-star condensed prime Warrior sent by the Lu’s, the group of two thousand Warriors, assembled from the ten most powerful martial family of Green Moon City, left civilization and began to search the wilderness and the mountains at an extremely slow pace.

Wild beasts usually do not hunt during hours of daylight. Therefore Ye Wei decided to spend his days at the Drakehead, and his nights hidden in the dark wilderness, watching over his family’s squad. When there were wild beasts approaching to their camps, Ye Wei was able to finish them off without anybody noticing.

Nine days had passed in the blink of an eye. Ye Wei was cultivating all this time at the pond before sunset, trying to improve as quickly as he possibly could. With the help of this sacred place, he was only a few steps away from his breakthrough to the four-star level.

The Ye family had been keeping themselves safe in the mansion. There was no unannounced Lu’s visits recently; the Ye’s were also safe, watched over, guarded by their family’s dedicated young Runemaster.

On the ninth day since the Ye patriarch sent the squad for the search, Ye Wei routinely stretched his body after a half day of cultivating. The sun was setting over the horizon and then, as usual, he hurried towards

his family squad's camp.

Part of the troops led by the Lu family finally reached North Hill Bay. Ye Wei became more anxious with each day, scared that they might intrude his family's sacred ground.

At the foothill of the Ye's ancestral burial hill, a dispute was brewing, and the Ye's were heated. The resting place of the family's ancestor was a prohibited area.

The Du family insisted to help with the search and were very pleased to finally have a reason to invade the Ye's ancestral land. The two families still remembered their fight for this plot of land and the Ye's were not happy to see their enemies so close.

The Du's had two hundred and twenty Warriors led by their Patriarch's brothers, Du Ji, a five star condensed prime Warrior. The pressure of their force was hanging over Ye's.

"Get out of my way, kid!" Yelled Du Ji as his cold gaze swept over the one hundred and fifty men the Ye's assembled and finally stopped on Ye Zhong's face.

"I, Du Ji, am here under the command of the Lu family! We are here to explore this land and report to them if there is any hidden abnormalities! Obstructing me to my task is the same as disrespecting the Lu, kid! Your pathetic family won't be able to deal with the consequences!" He suddenly took a step forward, his mighty Qi presence, like a massive boulder, solidly pressed towards the Ye's men and Ye Zhong.

The might of a five star condensed prime Warrior was fierce. All one hundred and fifty Warriors involuntarily took a step back. Ye Zhong was barely able to stand steadily, marginally withstood Du Ji's offensive Qi burst.

"Du Ji, this is my family's ancestral land! All of my forefathers were buried under the surface of this very hill. It is a sacred ground and I won't let anyone disturb the peace where their souls rest eternally!"

"I will never allow anyone set foot on the hill! If you wish to do so you

will have to step over my dead body!” Shouted Ye Zhong as he channeled his Qi, struggling to resist Du Ji’s force, but determined to protect his family’s burial hill with his life if needed.

During the past three years, due to the protection of Master Yi, the Du’s never dared to offend Ye family. However now the tides had changed, as they had the Lu family’s support they were no longer scared of the possibilities of Master Yi’s interference.

The Du family’s assets were irreversibly damaged by the rapid expansion of Ye family’s business, especially in the trades of scrolls and mystic arms. The Du’s were no longer a family everyone was scared of, and none of them were happy about the downfall and the suppression.

Therefore, even though the North Hill Bay area spread wide across more than thousands of miles, the Du’s deliberately set their eyes on the burial hill of the Ye family.

“Ye Zhong, I think your are overstepping yourself. As I have said, we are here under the Lu family’s command to explore this mountain. You have no other choice but to let us pass through, unless you want to deal with them instead of us!” sneered Du Ji, smiling viciously after he shamelessly name-dropping.

“As an established cultivator and reasonable man, I really do not want to fight you. I am no bully. But if you are going to be difficult, that leaves me no choice but to do exactly that! Well, I guess you can use a lesson on being respectful if you are dumb enough to mess with the Du family and the Lu family!” Du Ji threatened, grunting coldly.

‘Now with the Lu’s support, we are in the right. None of the Ye’s can do anything about it, even if I decide to paralyze Ye Zhong right here and right now. Obstructing the Lu’s search is not a small matter, if they hear about how the Ye’s are trying to sabotage their search, they might even reward me for my bravery!’

Du Ji’s eyes shone a sinister glow, he had actually been planning to start a fight with the Ye’s. Ever since the Lu’s came into the picture, the Du’s have been doing whatever they could to befriend the representatives

from the state-renowned martial family, hoping that their new ally could help them with their revenge against the Ye's.

It was clear to everyone in the Du family that once Ye Wei and Ye Zhong grew up to fulfil their cultivation potential, Green Moon City will no longer have space for the Du's.

Aware of that fact, the Du family wanted nothing more than to get rid of the two youngsters, However, it was impossible for them to do so when the Ye family was under Master Yi's watch and because the Ye's influence was growing non-stop throughout the past three years.

'This is the moment we've been waiting for! We can start the fight and the Lu's can finish them for us!'

Currently the Ye family was in no position and simply was not on the level the Lu's were on. With the Lu's wide web of connections, even Master Yi was in no position to challenge one of the most influential force in the Qing state.

"Brother Zhong, Du Ji is just looking for trouble here. Let's fight them!"

"Zhong, they do have two hundred and twenty, but I don't think we will lose the fight!" All the Ye's were overwhelmed by resentment, stood forth and unsheathed their weapons

Although the Ye's were outnumbered, they were still better equipped than the Du's, and a lot of them were even holding mystic scrolls and mystic arms.

The Ye's were aware they were not at a disadvantage.

Three years ago, Ye Wei acquired a large amount of treasures from Bloodmist Valley, most of which he gave to his family. Since then, his family was actually richer than the Big Three and had more treasures in their vault than even Green Moon City's City Lord.

Ye Zhong's body became tense, he lifted his arm and signaled his men to stand down. He knew the situation was more complicated and delicate than it appeared to most. Although he was aware that the Ye's might win, it was a risk he dared not to take.

‘Grandpa put these people’s lives in my hands! Every single one of these one hundred and fifty Warriors is a part of the family’s foundation, we cannot afford to lose any of them. Du Ji was a five star condensed prime Warrior, if the Ye’s were to win, they would have to keep the Du squad’s leader under control, which could not be done without sacrificing lives for it .

The consequence was too dire, Ye Zhong had no way to afford the loss, nor could the family afford to lose the loved ones they’ve invested time, care and resources on. After a fight like that, it would take the family more than thirty years to recover.

‘The Du family is clearly trying to turn the Lu’s against us. I can not make their wish come true and I shall not start a bloodshed here, right by where my ancestors were buried. They shall not step foot on the hill and they shall not shed their filthy blood here!’

Ye Zhong coldly stared at Du Ji, calculating, trying to figure out ways to counter the threat.

“Ye Zhong, kid, the Du family will not violate the the Lu’s orders, however I do know that we right now are standing on rightfully belongs to your family.” Du Ji’s rolled his eyes, chuckled and said: “I am going to give you one chance for you to prove your worthiness. If you are serious about protecting your ancestors’ resting place, I want you to take three punches for me! If you agree, I will order my men to back off and leave this hill alone! If the Lu’s will ask us what happened I will make something up so they would let you off.”

“So, what is it gonna be? Will you take three punches?” Du Ji strode forward and glared at Ye Zhong, putting him under more pressure in the tight situation.

The burial hill was the Ye’s land, Du Ji could feel that Ye Zhong would not decline the offer. ‘Ye Zhong would not refuse the only easy way out for the Ye if they wanted to keep their ancestral land’s integrity without harming anyone of the Ye’s Warriors.’

Du Ji’s smug smile was growing wider, he had already calculated the

next steps. When Ye Zhong agreed, he was going to strike the young cultivator with no mercy.

‘I can pretty much destroy your body with one punch! You will never walk again!’ There was nothing more the five-star condensed prime Warrior wanted than to destroy their rival family’s future.

“Fine, you’ve got yourself a deal!” Said Ye Zhong in a low tone. He nodded heavily, sighed and stepped forward

“Brother Zhong, don’t fall for this trap! He just wants you dead! Don’t forget that he is a lot stronger than you are! Don’t expose yourself to danger like this!”

“Brother Zhong, I know it’s important to guard the family’s ancestral land, but don’t sacrifice yourself like that, guarding what the forefathers left us is a duty all of us must oblige.”

None of the Ye’s could stay calm, they talked over one another after Ye Zhong spoke.

“Don’t say anything!” Ye Zhong grunted low and loud to catch everyone’s attention. He was aware of Du Ji’s intentions and had sent a messenger back to the Ye mansion since the Du’s started troubles at the bottom of the burial hill. He was now just buying time, hoping the messenger had already reached the Patriarch and that help was on the way.

“Good boy, I admire your courage. Here comes the first punch!” A grim smile appeared on Du Ji’s face. He opened his hand wide and casually flicked his fingers, his Qi rushed out together with sequences of runes.

“Zoom!”

The runes flickered faintly as a huge fiery red fist appeared. The air began to ripple while waves of heat emanated from the fist.

Under Du Ji’s command, the fist flew towards Ye Zhong, dropping on top of him like a burning meteor.

‘Low-level Myst stance, Scarlet Flame Fist!’ The cold brutal smile on Du

Ji became bigger.

Du Ji, the five-star condensed prime Warrior was much stronger than Ye Zhong and he knew that, but even so, he decided to use one of his strongest attacks right away.

A low-level Myst stance used by a five-star condensed prime Warrior was not something Ye Zhong could defend himself against.

Chapter 164 – Ye Wei Strikes Back

The fist gained more and more momentum while it was falling fiercely at Ye Zhong. As it was approaching its target, the whistling in the air intensified and became a loud rumble.

All the fallen leaves on the ground dried out completely and turned to powder.

Ye Zhong frowned at the roaring flame wrapped around the fist. He knew that Du Ji was much stronger than him; nevertheless, he didn't expect him to use such a powerful stance.

'Du Ji is using his full force. If this heavy Myst stance strike hits me, I will be gravely injured; that is if I manage to live!' Ye Zhong anxiously thought.

'High-level Spirit stance – White Tiger's Assault!' Ye Zhong bit his lips until he tasted hints of metallic sparkles in his blood. There were no signs of reinforcements on the horizon. He had no other choice but to rely on himself.

"Zoom!"

Sequences of runic patterns lit up, intertwined, and suddenly, a spectral tiger appeared in the air.

"Roar!"

The spectral tiger roared at the sky. The tiger swiftly stretched his legs and promptly lunged forward at the approaching fiery fist in the air.

Although the tiger's strike was ferocious, its power was stopped the exact moment Du Ji's fiery fist connected. The spectral beast faded and crumbled in the incinerating heatwave.

Ye Zhong's White Tiger Assault and Du Ji's were both low-level Myst stances. However, powered by a five-star condensed prime Warrior, the

Scarlet Flame Fist reigned superior. The unreserved lethal punch did not slow down at all after crushing the big cat.

The flame fist continued to enlarge in Ye Zhong's eyes while approaching with unbelievable speed. Ye Zhong quickly leaped backwards. Using a protecting stance to envelop his whole body, he was ready to face this attack. He would never let the Du's set foot on his family's grounds.

Just as the fist was about to land on Ye Zhong's chest, a blurred figure appeared in mid-air. It brought Ye Zhong ten meters away from the fist's course and saved him from the horrifying attack.

“Bang!”

The fiery fist fiercely struck the dust. A loud rumble echoed throughout the mountains. The whole forest shook, birds flew in fear, and land animals ran for cover. When the debris settled, a ten meters wide pit appeared on the ground.

“Ye Wei!” Du Ji's face turned ashen. He coldly stared at the shadowy figure next to Ye Zhong.

Ye Wei interfered at the absolute last moment. His cousin Ye Zhong would have been lying dead in that pit right now if he was just a tenth of a second slower.

Ye Wei, being Master Yi's only legacy apprentice and being the hero who fought a powerful demon at the Ning City tournament, was a renowned person in Green Moon City. His accomplishments spread so fast Du Ji heard all of the news surrounding Ye Wei at a restaurant. Through other guests' chitchat, he gained an understanding of Ye Wei before he was told the news by the Du family's scouts.

While the smoke and dust settled down, Ye Wei casually removed the dirt from his robe. He then glared fiercely at Du Ji.

The Ye family were always the top priority for Ye Wei. All of his heart belonged to his roots. At the threat of the Lu family, he had to be cautious and patient, but he would not tolerate Du's terrorizing.

“Ye Wei, like I said to your cousin, I was ordered by the Lu family to check these grounds! Are you sure you want to confront the Lu’s?!” Shouted Du Ji. He was irritated by the youngster’s interruption.

Du Ji shivered under Ye Wei’s cold gaze. He knew he could not stop Ye Wei by force, therefore resorted to threatening his family. ‘Hmph, it seems this kid doesn’t dare to mess with the Lu’s’, Du Ji mischievously concluded.

“It was the Lu’s elders order. We are not going to disobey, and we are going to explore this land even if it’s your family’s burial hill. You can’t afford to be responsible for holding us down here, can you?”

Du Ji stood still as Ye Wei slowly approached him step by step. ‘What if those rumors are right, and this kid was able to defeat that demon?!’ A trace of fear flashed in his eyes, ‘I once fought a demon at the same level too, and if it wasn’t for the Patriarch’s intervene, I would surely have died.’

Feeling threatened, Du Ji spoke unwillingly in a soft voice, “Us Du’s, just like your family, are from Green Moon City, ordered and used by Lu family. We are forced to do this just as you are. If you let us continue, we give you our promise that everything will be left intact on your grounds. If you decide to stand in the way, we have no other choice but to report your disobedience to the Lu’s.”

‘So you are respecting us now?’ Ye Wei surmised. He was disgusted by Du Ji’s attitude. Smiling disdainfully, Ye Wei stated, ‘If you really did respect us, how do you explain what you tried to do to my cousin?’

‘Ye Zhong is just a one-star condensed prime Warrior. Du Ji clearly wanted to kill him and then immediately retreat, so he could bring the Lu’s to exterminate my family!’

‘Respect? You wouldn’t even think about respecting anyone if I was not here, opportunistic snake!’

Ye Zhong was smart enough to understand Du’s intentions. He used the voice transmission technique to talk to Ye Wei in private, “They want to destroy our family; this won’t end neatly. If I let Du Ji go, the first

thing he will do is to complain to the Lu's! That means they might bring havoc to the burial hill.'

Ye Wei's head was spinning. He tried to think a way out of this mess. His ultimate duty was to defend his ancestral grounds for future generations of Ye family.

Suddenly, Ye Zhong's voice sounded in Ye Wei's mind, "Ye Wei, if you take Du Ji, I will be able to take out the rest. We have some powerful men with us. They won't just stand and watch. These are our ancestral grounds, and we must defend them!" Ye Zhong had heard about Ye Wei's achievements in Ning City and believed his cousin, surely the strongest cultivator of the family, was strong enough to take control of the situation.

Ye Wei was uncertain, 'Cousin Zhong, You want us to kill all the witnesses?'

Ye Wei had never killed an innocent before. He was hesitant. Even though it was Du family members in front of him, it would still be murder. Furthermore, committing a sinister act of that scale would leave marks on his mind, a dark chapter will never be beneficial to his ability to focus when he would cultivate.

The situation was urgent. Ye Wei knew he couldn't just keep thinking about the consequences. One Du escapee would mean the end of his family. He had to help his cousin, "No, this isn't fair. If we have to kill, I cannot let you do all the dirty work," Ye Wei looked determined. It appeared there was no other choice.

"Ye Wei, let me do this. Your talent is extraordinary, and you are the hope and future of our family. As long as you deal with Du Ji, I should be able to take care of the rest. You don't even need to kill him, rather, just keep him under control. I am ready to do the rest.' Ye Zhong said earnestly. He made a hand signal, and Ye's men who surrounded the Du's squad dispersed.

"Little Wei, don't give Du Ji a hard time. He's almost peeing his pants; in the end, he is in a way innocent. He is just following his patriarch and

the Lu's orders. I would do something similar in his position.”

“This has to be done clean! No one, absolutely no one, can escape!” Ye Zhong laughed. Then he spoke to Du Ji, “Hey, we understand the Du family’s situation, and you can’t really just leave our ancestral land unsearched.”

Ye Zhong was trying to gain some time and draw Du Ji’s attention away from Ye Wei.

“But there is a requisite,” Ye Zhong smiled. He narrowed his eyes as he started to approach Du Ji, “You have to withstand three blows, from my little cousin, to prove that you are worthy, then I will let you search the...”

Du Ji was not a fool. Seeing both Ye Wei and Ye Zhong approach, he was aware something was up. ‘They want to kill us all. These Ye brothers are ruthless, like the patriarch warned me.’ He felt threatened, however, the five-star condensed prime Warrior knew better than to panic.

“I will let the Lu’s decide!” Du Ji responded before Ye Zhong finished his sentence. Ye Wei and Ye Zhong heard a sound of a scroll being torn.

“Woosh!” hundreds of runes burst out of the scroll. Empowered by Du Ji’s Qi, the runes formed a yellow beam of light that broke through the thin night mist. The beams transformed into two huge letter. The surname «Lu» appeared in a starry sky in an eye-catching shade of gold.

Du Ji used one of the scrolls provided by the Lu family. The flare is visible within a radius of one hundred miles. All the leaders of the martial family squads were given one, including Ye Zhong. If someone would use it, it would notify one of the Lu’s ten-star condensed prime Warrior on guard around the area.

At this very moment, Lu Zhong was sitting on one of the tree branches many miles away from the Ye’s burial grounds when he noticed the letters. He stood up abruptly, surprised, and hopeful.

“Did they find the Drakehead?!” exclaimed Lu Zhong excitedly. He hurriedly used a transportation stance and turned into a flash of light.

He moved instantly towards the spot indicated by the signal.

Lu Feng's cultivating was disturbed by a small explosion. He opened his eyes. "Ehm...?" At the quiet pond, he was also able to see his family name spelled in the starry sky.

He frowned, slowly stood up still, and stared at the golden letters in the sky. He as well turned into a blurred figure in the dark forest and hurried in the same direction.

'I would like to see what happened.' Thought Lu Feng while flying through the mountains.

While the two Lu's headed to the foothills where the Du's and Ye's stood off, Ye Wei and his cousin uncomfortably stared at the night sky, frowning.

The Ye cousins planned to neutralize Du Ji quietly and swiftly. They wanted to attack the whole squad before anyone could notify anyone. Unfortunately, they didn't expect him to be so alert. It would not be wise for the Ye's to make a move now the Lu family would be rushing over.

'Du Ji almost killed my cousin. I cannot let him walk free.'

'Fortunately, it won't take me long to destroy this conniving snake.' Ye Wei curled his fingers. Before Du Ji even saw one rune being drawn, five Peerless Qi Swords were already en route.

Chapter 165 – Line

The peerless Qi Swords was building blocks of a Sky stance. Although Ye Wei was far from finishing the Zodiac Sword stance, Du Ji still had no way of defending himself against it.

“The Lu’s men are about to arrive, and you dare to aim your stance at me? You are out of your mind!” Panic flashed in Du Ji’s eyes while he watched the five Qi Sword rapidly coming towards him. ‘You will pay for this when they are here!’

Confronted by sharp edges, Du Ji’s pupils shrunk in sheer nervousness. He reacted quickly and channeled his Qi to defend himself. ‘Low-level Myst stance, Cyan Light Shield.’ His hands were flashing in the air drawing rune after rune, forming a defensive stance. Soon, the rune sequence glowed and transformed its shape; a large light shield appeared in front of his body.

The Du family was once one of Green Moon City’s Big Three. They had a total of four Myst stances, which they passed down through generations since their rise. Two of them were low-level Myst stances and the other two were mid-level. These stances were available only to the patriarch.

Du Ji, a five-star condensed prime Warrior, was in a relatively high position in the Du family. He was able to master both the low-level Myst stances that he could access such as the Scarlet Flame Fist and the defensive Cyan Light Shield.

He was renowned in the city, both as a very powerful cultivator and a master of the two Myst stances. Even if he was only a five-star condensed prime level, his shield was powerful enough to withstand a six-star condensed prime Warrior’s attack.

However, under the edge of Ye Wei’s Peerless Qi Swords, the stance that had stopped countless powerful cultivators, was no more protective

than a piece of paper. Ye Wei's Qi bolts penetrated the green shield effortlessly, dug into Du Ji's arms, legs and his dantian while the shield was still completely intact.

Ye Wei was showing no mercy for someone who threatened to wipe his entire family from the face of the earth.

"Aaah!" the horrifying sound of Du Ji's screams sent chills through everyone's body. His arms, legs, and dantian were ripped, spilling blood all over while Du Ji fell to his knees. The ground beneath him was completely dyed in red.

"I thought we made a deal? You shouldn't have agreed to my cousin's suggestion if you are not strong enough to take just one blow?" Ye Wei calmly but sarcastically questioned Du Ji. He had to deal with Du Ji quickly before the Lu's arrived. 'He tried to hurt Ye Zhong. It's only fair he tastes his own medicine!'

'So, when the Lu's come I can tell them he agreed to this...' Ye Wei decided.

Du Ji heard Ye Wei's words, but he was too weak to react. He finally dropped on the ground and fainted.

'The Du's were shocked. Judging from Du Ji's injuries, they could see that their leader was unlikely to ever stand on his feet again.

This defeat just ruined any chances for Du Ji to continue cultivating. He would be cast aside because of his defeat. His cultivation would wither, and he would be a burden for his family from now on.

'You deserve every bit of this suffering you will taste for the rest of your pitiful life!' Ye Wei looked at the Du Ji who was paralyzed on the ground. 'The moment you wanted to kill my cousin Zhong was the moment you should have been prepared to get killed yourself.'

'The Ye family was left to the Du's mercy three years ago. If it wasn't for Master Yi, we would have been wiped out. However, we are no longer like we were at that time!' Suddenly, a thunderous rumble sounded. It grew louder and louder as a shadowy figure approached. It was Lu Zhong, a

ten-star condensed prime Warrior the Lu family sent to coordinate the search.

Lu Zhong thought that someone had found the Drakehead, so he rushed as if his life depended on it . He didn't expect to see two troops standing off under the moonlight by a hill.

An angry cry resonated within the night, "My family sent you here to look for treasure not to fight each other!"

"Sir, you have to give us justice! The Ye's disobeyed your commands! They were preventing us from entering the area! They also attacked Du Ji!" One of the Du's Warriors stood forth and kneeled before Lu Zhong, "I don't think Du Ji will live if he doesn't get medical attention immediately" he cried as he pointed to his fallen leader.

Lu Zhong surveyed the scene. He could tell he was not at the Drakehead. All he could see was the Du's in a pitiful state, kneeling before him. Seeing Ye Wei, his face ashened and his gaze was sharp as daggers.

"What the hell did you do to him?! He is here under my command!" Lu Zhong's fierce roar froze the Ye's in place and stopped their hearts. His presence oozed anger and crushed towards the Ye's squad.

"If you do not give me a reasonable explanation for these bold and stupid acts, your family will cease to exist in a day's time!" Lu Zhong's eyes finally rested on the Ye cousins standing in front of their men.

'That's Ye Wei!' Murmured Lu Feng, watching the scene unfold from the wilderness. The memory of the Runamaster's exam suddenly appeared in his mind.

'This kid is really talented. Maybe I still can recruit him afterall and fit him into my plan.' Lu Feng's revenge was always the first thought in his mind. The humiliation his mother suffered was not easily forgotten.

Lu family was influential inside and outside Qing state. Lu Feng knew everything these people were capable of, 'I can't stand against them alone. They are capable of sending returned prime Warriors here if they

do find the place. However, maybe if this kid joins my side...' Lu Feng was thinking, plotting. He was afraid his family's men would find the Drakehead soon. He needed powerful reinforcement to distract and send people away from the pond. He could not bear the thought of losing it.

Lu Feng needed someone as talented as Ye Wei. Nevertheless, he knew since the Runemaster Union entry exam that Ye Wei still held a grudge for what happened three years ago.

"Ye Wei, you are a complete idiot to challenge Lu Zhong. He might be only a ten-star condensed prime Warrior, but he was known for his madness! He would even interrupt an elder if he heard something he didn't agree with," Lu Feng mumbled to himself. He was curious to see how this would unroll.

Lu Zhong's sister, Lu Rong, was one of the elders and one of the strongest cultivators in the family. She was the reason Lu Zhong was bold, crazy but uncontested by the council of the well established family. She was also the person who vouched for him to be in charge of the operation around North Hill Bay, the area which the Lu's intel told the council the Drakehead was likely to be.

Lu Rong wanted the council to trust her brother. Thus, if he was successful in locating the Drakehead, he would gain a better, more solid reputation.

"This time I might be able to get him on my side. I will wait for a good opportunity to reveal myself and help him when he gets in trouble!' Lu Feng concluded while he watched the Ye's.

"Wipe out Ye family?!" Ye Wei's eyes filled with burning rage. Nonetheless, he reminded himself that he must be patient for now. He must handle this situation without causing any casualties to occur. He could always make Lu Zhong pay for those disrespectful words once he became stronger.

"Mister, please be reasonable and listen to what I have to say before reacting hastily. There is no reason for the Ye's to slow the Lu's operation down. We were trying to carry out the search carefully at our

ancestor's resting place! I promise you, the Du's are trying to frame us on the spot." Ye Wei said calmly.

"Is it so?" Lu Zhong gloomy face slowly turned towards Du Ji, who was laying on the ground in a pool of his own blood.

"This lone hill is my family's burial ground. The Du's always kept a grudge against my family due to some recent dispute. They took the chance to make a mess at our ancestor's graves while they were up there, so we asked them down to talk it out peacefully!"

"There would be no way we let them on our sacred grounds just to watch them destroy everything as they do a rough job! Besides, he almost killed my cousin when my cousin was trying to reason with him. I was then lucky enough to stop him right before my innocent cousin would have lost his life!" Said Ye Wei, doing a great job to sound shakened.

Hearing Ye Wei's speech, Ye Zhong's face lit up. The situation wasn't so bad presented the way his young cousin did. 'Maybe our ancestral grounds won't be tainted after all.'

Ye Zhong bowed before Lu Zhong saying "Please, Mister. We just wanted to do a thorough job the most respectful way, for the Lu family's and for the Ye family's honor. We had to stand against the Du's and their unreasonable claims!"

"Please, give us justice!" The rest of the Ye's joined in.

"The Du family clearly wants to take advantage of the Lu's. You should remove the black sheep from the herd." Ye Zhong was trying to sound as indignified as he could, playing along with Ye Wei's speech. "You don't want innocent blood on your family's name right? You have to make an example or people like the Du's will just bring shame and injustice to our doorsteps!"

"Nonsense!"

"We didn't even touch the hill because you didn't let us! Don't let them fool you!" The Du's replied, angered by the lies.

Lu Zhong cautiously looked over the two families' squad standing

opposite to each other. He sensed that something strange was going on and though one of the sides wanted to fool him, he did not have any useful evidence to make a fair decision.

Peeking from the side, Lu Feng was amused by this whole situation, 'This Ye Wei is quite a character. Lu Zhong usually isn't easily deceived.'

"I will not interfere with the dispute between you! Our task must be completed, so stop wasting my precious time! All of you, come up the hill with me to search this area once more!" Lu Zhong pondered for just a moment then gave his orders, "I want every inch of the bay area dug three feet deep!"

Lu Zhong decided to stay out of the argument, he did not care who was buried under the ground if it was not the Supreme who died around the region centuries ago.

"Yes! That's a wise decision, Mister!" The Du's were ecstatic. With the Lu's backing their cause, they marched up the hill while scornfully looking down on the Ye's.

Ye Wei, Ye Zhong and the rest were looking somber.

"This hill belongs to the Ye's, our history and pride were buried on this hill!" Ye Wei said furiously, paused and ground his teeth after saying each word.

Lu Zhong cried out, "I do not care who is buried here. How dare you blocking my way?! He is interrupting a Lu family operation! Kill him!"

Du's were waiting for this moment, excited to see the Ye family getting destroyed by the Lu's.

The Ye squad's eyes went bloodshot, Ye Wei in particular was ready to charge forth. Knowing that their ancestral burial grounds will be stepped on by the enemies, none of them could remain calm.

The Ye's did not take a move, they all stood still and looked towards Ye Wei.

Although Ye Wei was seldom home, they were all aware that

throughout the years Ye Wei had become the family's soul, a person they all admired.

To everyone on the squad, Ye Wei was as influential as the Ye Patriarch.

Ye Wei extended his fingers, with his Qi Sword he drew a three feet wide line on the dirt between the Du's and the hill. "Who crosses this line, will be dead!" He shouted.

Chapter 166 – Madman

The gust of sharp Qi-fused breeze hit the Du's who stood close by and left fine lines of red marks on the exposed areas of their bodies. Stunned, no one dared to cross the line on the ground.

They didn't think Ye Wei would dare to use force against them in front of a Lu.

"You ignorant kid! Do you want to die?!" Lu Zhong's face twitched in anger, "Like I said. All of you, come up the hill with me to search this area once more!"

Bloodlust was overtaking Lu Zhong's consciousness, his Qi rushed out, fluttered his long robe. Both of his hands disappeared, sequences of runes surged in the air while his hands flashed in the shape of mysterious hand seals.

Rumble!

Lu Zhong's Qi was flowing through the hundreds of runes. Immense surge of power was building up between the earth and the sky, so powerful that all the trees around fell at once, cut to their roots, gigantic rocks floated around.

A spectral giant bird of prey flew out from the explosion of the runes. Its cyan wings flapped rapidly. Tornadoes of primal energy swept the ground at the foot of the Ye's ancestral burial hill.

"Could this be?" Lu Feng gasped, still hidden in the dark, shocked by the sight of the shadowy shape. "The Seal of Cyan Hawk, high-level Myst stance!" Lu Feng mumbled, looking horrified, "He used this stance once to defeat a peak ten-star condensed prime Warrior with ease. Should I really intervene before it's too late for Ye Wei?"

"Lu Zhong going in for the kill!" Lu Feng always knew that Lu Zhong was an old maniac but didn't expect him to act this hysterically, the level

of ruthlessness was beyond his comprehension.

‘All the Lu’s that have been sent to Green Moon City were warned not to mess with Master Yi. Even the elders seem to be afraid of what he might do. Doesn’t he know Ye Wei is Master Yi’s only legacy apprentice?!’

‘The pond is nearby, to let the Lu’s draw their men here would mean uncovering the Drakehead! This madness needs to stop! We can’t have Master Yi and the Lu elders here!’ Thought Lu Feng as he rushed out from his cover to stop.

‘I acted too late!’

The cyan hawk gradually gathered his full strength, flapped its cyan wings to climb higher into the sky. Its beak suddenly opened and, after a few piercing trills, spewed out round after round of a silver lightning.

Rumble!

The silver lightning rained down mercilessly onto Ye Wei and the Ye’s men. The earth crumbled while the silvery energy bolts were still mid-air. The cracks on the ground rapidly grew outwards as the hawk’s strike accelerated, the whole burial hill shook to the ten-star condensed prime Warrior’s powerful stance.

While others were weak on their knees, Ye Wei did not even flinch. When confronted by the bolts of lightning, Ye Wei stomped the ground, and clouds of runes appeared at the bottom of his feet. Riding the clouds of star-shaped rune sequences, Ye Wei’s movements became unpredictable. He then fearlessly leaped right into the storm without a second of hesitation.

‘These men behind me are my family’s foundation and future, I have to protect them!’ thought Ye Wei. He was aware that even the edge of Lu Zhong’s powerful high-level Myst stance would end the lives of many of these weaker Warriors.

Therefore, Ye Wei couldn’t just hide. He was there to defend his family’s past, present and future.

‘Supernova stance, Second Evolution!’ Ye Wei’s earnest gaze was set on

the lightning storm's center. His body shone golden, Ye Wei's Qi was amplified, burst out of the runes on his bones.

'Nine-star condensed prime level!?' Lu Feng's jaws dropped.

Amplified by the Supernova stance, Ye Wei's cultivation exploded instantly. The presence of a three-star condensed prime Warrior intensified, compressed and expanded to three times its original size and strength.

'Now, Selenic Triple-Primal Sword.'

Although inside the lightning storm, Ye Wei was protected by the thick layer of primal energy that oozed out from his skin, his hands danced in the air, guiding his dense Qi into the runes he just drew. From just spots of scattered energy the runes merged and grew, taking the shape of an ancient sword.

Ye Wei barely hesitated, he assessed the situation quickly and figured out that it was necessary to use the Glacial Emperor's stance.

The ten meters Qi Sword was now infused with the power of Zhoutian Sword Notion and Polaris Academy's Starshifter Form, the stance now belonged to peak high-level Myst grade.

As the long sword began to shine brighter, Ye Wei's will-force and Qi were drained completely.

Only returned prime Warriors or above were able to use high-level Myst stances without emptying their Sentients and dantians. Ye Wei was able to use it but it was in no means an easy task for the young cultivator.

'The rumors were true! This kid is as powerful as a ten star condensed prime Warrior!' Lu Feng held himself back, stared at the Qi sword in the sky as it fell down and defensively covered his body with a thin layer of energy. His widened eyes were struggling to even blink. 'Ten-star condensed prime level... But the reports say he was only a three-star condensed prime Warrior!?'

Both the Ye's and the Du's were stunned by the teenager's display of power Open-mouthed, their heads were swinging from left to right and

back, trying to track Ye Wei's figure.

The Qi sword was surrounded by runes arranged in star constellations patterns. Ye Wei controlled it telepathically, made it tear through the night sky, and the sword, together with the runes, sped towards the silvery lightning storm.

“Boom! Boom! Boom!”

The star-like runes crashed onto the lightning bolts mid-air. A burst of explosive light blinded everyone at the bottom of the hill.

The silvery bolts vanished together with the star-like runes. With fear in his eyes, Lu Zhong watched the Qi sword penetrate the spectral beast like a hot knife into butter.

“Meet your maker!” Ye Wei ground his teeth and watched his Qi Sword as it sank into the cyan hawk.

“Bang!”

A destructive rippling force wave grew and filled the space, as the entire hilt disappeared into the bird. The mountains shook and the ground cracked. All the rocks and stones began to float, the trees that broke off started levitating.

All the cultivators were shivering, they huddled up in fear, confused, speechless.

“Rumble!”

Inside the blinding globe of light, the spectral bird and the Qi sword disintegrated. The mix of scattered runes and energy reacted with each other and vigorously exploded.

Both Ye Wei and Lu Zhong were hit heavily by the explosion and sent flying backwards.

Ye Wei's face became pale, a line of blood dripped out of the corner of his lips. Although Selenic Triple-Primal Sword was no weaker than the Seal of Cyan Hawk, the ten-star condensed prime Warrior was good at his favourite stance. Ye Wei sustained some minor injuries.

On the other side, Lu Zhong was shocked by the intense agony, his body was covered with gashes. His clothes were soaked in blood, ‘How did a kid hurt me this bad!?’

“How can a small city like Green Moon City produce a youngster that powerful!?” Lu Zhong’s eyes glittered, his face turned dark, realizing he might actually lose, ‘The strongest youngster in the Lu family cannot even compare to this kid here...’

‘If I retreat now, I will become a joke!’

“Looks like you need some help!” Lu Feng revealed himself.

“What? Why are you here!?” Lu Zhong frowned, not please to see the bastard child. He never liked that the family decided to recognize Lu Feng’s existence, how the board decided to include the two-star Runemaster as a part of the family.

“Why are you here?” Ye Wei’s face was completely pale, he glared coldly, exhausted. “Are you here to cause trouble again?” “This is the man responsible for cousin Zhong’s coma!’

‘Ye Wei, if I assume correctly, your Qi and will-force have been drained? Let me be honest with you, kid, your opponent here, is famous for his recklessness. He once fought a returned prime level elder just because he wasn’t in the mood to listen. You could have been killed here.1 Lu Feng established eye contact with Ye Wei, his voice transformed into thin strands of Qi and the words sounded in Ye Wei’s mind..

“Pfft, then I will kill as much as I can before I fall!” Ye Wei replied with the same voice transmission technique, ‘What are you planning now, Lu Feng!’

“Stop being stubborn, what do you get out of your family’s demise!? I can actually help you here!” Lu Feng shook his head and said.

“You? Help? Like how you helped the Du family three years ago? You are a Lu, just state your damn intention!” Ye Wei sneered.

“Ye Wei, I admire you. With your talent, it is just a matter of time before you become a returned prime Warrior. I am sure by now you’ve

heard how the Lu's exiled my mother. I hate them as much as you do!" Lu Feng sincerely looked at Ye Wei, "I plan to wipe out the Lu's in the frame of three years, and I can't do it all on my own."

"Furthermore, I will offer you one of my secrets. I know a spot where you can cultivate more efficiently. I am the only person who knows the exact location of a Drakehead very close to where we are right now!" Lu Feng was desperate, he replied quickly.

"You know of a Drakehead?" Ye Wei's pupils dilated, 'So that's why you wanted to take over North Hill Bay!'

"I do and I am willing to share that information with you if you are to join force with me. Just one condition, you will have to make a heavenly oath and swear you will not tell anyone about the Drakehead!" Lu Feng was talking quickly. 'Just say yes you idiot, you are going to die otherwise!'

Lu Feng knew that if he was to team up with a strong cultivator like Ye Wei, the Lu's might not ever find what they were looking for. 'As much as they hate saying it, even the Lu's are a bit scared of Master Yi and the Runemaster Union behind him. Come on Ye Wei, just do what is right!'

Chapter 167 – Joint Force

“Lu Feng, I do not wish to follow you! However, you are welcome to hold back the Lu family if you hate them this much!” Ye Wei had to make the right decision here. “I will aid you. But I do not wish to have anything to do with Du’s! I feel like I’ve betrayed what’s good in me just having to consider siding with you!”

“Since the Lu’s came to Green Moon City, the Du’s decided they should be the two Lu elders’ dogs, I would love to get rid of these cowards, just let me deal with the Du family! And, if we are going to work together in anyway, I need us to make a heavenly oath as soon as possible!” Lu Feng’s brows rose and continued: “Because I can’t trust you either!”

Lu Feng also knew how valuable Ye Wei was to him. ‘A sixteen years old three-star Runemaster, a kid who can fight a ten-star condensed prime Warrior, one of the God’s Seven, we will complement each other and no one will be able to stand in or way after the heavenly oath!’

“Okay, but let’s not waste time, as soon as we deal with this madman, we will make a heavenly oath.” Ye Wei nodded, although him and Lu Feng had an unfriendly past, he was ready to put it behind him, ‘Desperate time calls for desperate measure, there are more important things than revenge. I will have to put my grudges to the side for now to live.’

Ye Wei nodded gently. This wasn’t exactly what he wanted, but the Lu’s were their common enemy after all.

‘Good that he agrees... This kid is too talented and with the aid of the Drakehead he will become even more powerful! But as long as we are bound by the oath I have nothing to be afraid of when he becomes something I have no chance of controlling!’ thought Lu Feng, excited and at the same time terrified.

They quickly finished their conversation through the voice transmission technique.

Lu Feng paced slowly towards Lu Zhong and whispered just three things, “A three-star Runemaster. One of the God’s Seven. Master Yi’s only legacy apprentice.”

“What?! What did you just say? He is who’s what?” Lu Zhong’s heart skipped a beat. He frowned, and his eyebrows almost stuck together.

During the fight, it became clear to Lu Zhong that the Ye Wei had been trained well, he could see the teenager’s fighting techniques were advanced, but he never realized he was fighting a Runemaster.

Just the titles were enough to provoke Lu Zhong’s fear. If he had harmed Ye Wei there, he would have had to stand trial not only in front of the Green Army but also the Runemaster Union for the untolerated crime of harming a potential leader of mankind. ‘Even if I ignore all these people behind the kid, am I really able to kill him? I’ve never bled this much in a fight.’

Lu Feng saw how Lu Zhong’s face changed. He decided to strike the iron while it’s hot. He chuckled and said in a laughing voice, “You can beat this kid easily, I mean, you are a ten-star condensed prime Warrior, that’s exactly why the Du’s want to use you to deal with the Ye’s! I can take over and do the search myself with the Ye’s to make sure that the job is done properly while the Du’s will stay down here! You can take the time to rest and recover from your injuries and watch over these cowards.”

‘I guess I should give this bastard a try, he seems knowledgeable.’ Lu Zhong liked what he was hearing. He patted Lu Feng trustingly on the shoulder, “Indeed. Like you said, this kid is very talented. You may take care of your ancestral lands. This young Runemaster earned it.”

His sight finally fell onto the Du’s, “All of you are now under the command of Lu Feng. Do not dare disobey him! Or you will have to deal with me!”

Lu Zhong knew that if the fight went on, he would anger a lot of

powerful men and probably even face exile. He therefore took his opportunity to step down and pass the responsibility over to Lu Feng, stepping away from the heat as quick as he could. ‘I never thought I could trust this lovechild kid, I would have dug myself in a hole if he didn’t help me in time!’

“I would like to apologize. I hope, you and your family can forgive my recklessness”, Ye Wei casted his eyes towards Lu Feng, playing along.

“It was my privilege to fight such a talented youngster! And that was enough fighting for today! Come join me and Lu Feng for a drink, we should celebrate instead!” Lu Zhong was trying to unkink the misunderstandings. Knowing Ye Wei could one day be an influential person, he didn’t want or need more conflicts.

“Such hospitality and this is not even your home, I wouldn’t dare declining,” smiled Ye Wei. He then looked to the side and winked at his cousin, “Ye Zhong, would you please take the rest of the Ye’s and also Lu Feng with you so we can finish the search of this hill. Be quick, we don’t want to miss the Lu’s family feast and Lu Feng needs to join us for a drink before eating!”

“Alright then. Let’s go!” Ye Zhong was confused by sudden request from Ye Wei to let Lu Feng help them search the grounds. But he knew his cousin would know better than put their family at risk, so he faithfully followed the lead.

“Lu Zhong! Are you going to leave Du Ji here? He was attacked by the Ye’s! We demand justice!” The Du’s were dumbfounded by the development, craved revenge.

Do Ji was a great cultivator and one of the strongest in the Du family. Besides, the Du’s used to be the Big Three of this city, they had never been treated like this.

“Humpf, I have heard about the shady things your family did three years ago when the elders briefed us about Green Moon City. Furthermore, it’s none of my business if this useless puppet decided to mess with someone he can’t handle!” Said Lu Zhong and chuckled

disdainfully. His cold glare like daggers landed on the Du's squad.

Ye Wei looked at the Du's. 'I had to show my strength and had Lu Feng talk this out for me, if not for him I would have been in trouble now! Ha, why do you Du's think you can convince this madman at all? Lu Zhong would not show mercy, not to puppets.'

"No, not puppet, more like a dog." Said Ye Wei. The Du stared back at Ye Wei, but didn't dare to say anything further.' The Lu family is clearly favouring us. If the Du's won't stand back right now, they might lose more than their squad leader.'

Du's cold glares were piercing Ye Wei, the sole reason why they didn't succeed in their mission and the man who paralyzed a valuable asset of the Du family.

Ye Zhong and the rest started moving towards the hill. This storm had finally passed.

Ye Wei then told his cousin to return to the camp and he followed Lu Feng, away from the burial hill.

The two young Runemasters found a quiet spot close by, stood together on a peak and made sure they weren't followed. Neither of them spoke a word. Lu Feng's robe fluttered, the cold breezes whistled between the hills and the mountains.

Ye Wei looked calmly towards Lu Feng, 'He wasn't lying about the Drakehead. But how did he find it in the first place?' He appeared calm but his mind was restless, trying to find answers, explanations.

'I guess it doesn't matter as long as the Lu's cannot find the Drakehead. Me and Lu Feng will be able to control the Lu's for now. I think I made the right decision'

"Don't you want me to tell you more about the Drakehead?" Lu Feng seemed to read Ye Wei's mind with his cold glance, "As soon as we've made the heavenly oath, I will take you there."

'Ye Wei's strength was comparable to a ten-star condensed prime Warrior. I cannot match him,' Lu Feng remembered how he couldn't

sense Ye Wei's Qi and wondered if the teenager had already recovered from fighting Du Ji.

"What are we waiting for then?" Ye Wei replied

"We solemnly declare, that we mean well to each other!" They said in unison and held each other's arm.

"I shall not expose the location of the Drakehead in any way." Ye Wei swore.

"I shall not harm the Ye's in any way." Lu Feng followed.

"Come with me!" Lu Feng felt reassured and led the way.

Ye Wei effortlessly kept up, the closer they were to the pond the more Ye Wei appreciated his old rival's honesty, 'Lu Feng really knows!'

As they were reaching the pond, an incredulous look spread over Ye Wei's face, "How did you find this place?!" He said.

"A few years ago, I was told about my past, I ran away from what I thought was my family, just to have some time and space so I could clear my mind. I accidentally wandered into North Hill Bay, and found the Drakehead." Lu Feng answered, pointing at the pond.

"These past years I have been investing my time and effort onto rune knowledge, not much onto actually cultivating. However I was able to breakthrough to become a four-star condensed prime Warrior, which I am actually very proud of, considering my age." Lu Feng looked at the small ripples on the pond, his lips curled up to a self-disapproving smile, "It's nothing compared to what you've achieved of course..."

Lu Feng had always been confident with his talent, especially since he discovered the Drakehead, nobody in his circle could challenge him.

But when he met Ye Wei, his world turned upside down. Meeting a sixteen year old boy, who was able to better him at the Runemaster Union entry exam, made him reevaluate life. Meeting Ye Wei for the second time, Lu Feng was completely humble before the three-star Runemaster who managed to go even while fighting a ten-star

condensed prime Warrior.

‘Ye Wei, the boy with red Sentient... You deserve the Drakehead more than I do,’ thought Lu Feng. Comparing himself to Ye Wei, he suddenly felt unworthy. He could no longer be proud of any of his accomplishments.

Although Lu Feng had planned his revenge for long, he realized he was still not ready to take on the Lu’s, ‘Is three years really enough? Can I keep the Drakehead from the Lu’s while trying to assemble my own crew?’

If the Lu’s were not desperately trying to discover the Drakehead, Lu Feng would have had all the time he needed to harvest its power and, as he planned, become an influential figure within the family.

However, even though the Lu’s didn’t know the exact location of the Supreme’s resting place, they were still aware that it was nearby Green Moon City. It would not take them more than two or three years to figure out the rest with the resources they had access to.

Once they found the sacred place, Lu Feng would have lost his only way to avenge his mother.

His desire to recruit Ye Wei was based on his fear of not being able to achieve his goal on his own, so he would rather share the sacred place with the powerful kid that would be his ally, if the kid too, wished to keep it a secret.

“You and I are like Yin and Yan, dark and light! We will complement each other and will be able to delay their search for at least a year, maybe two if we are lucky.”

“Even I don’t plan to mess them up before three years of preparation. It’s impossible for me to become strong enough to physically challenge the Lu’s elders. They were the people that made my mother suffer!”

“I was lucky to meet you! Ye Wei, you are the most talented person I’ve ever seen. Even the best cultivators in Lu’s family are not superior to you.”

“Within three year, I definitely think that you will be able to challenge the Lu’s! I don’t want much for myself. I just want to avenge my mother. I can’t let them torture her any longer! The Lu’s have to pay for what they did!” Lu Feng fiercely ground his teeth.

“Do not worry. We have made a heavenly oath. If you decide to challenge Lu’s in three years, I won’t just stand and watch.” Ye Wei was feeling Lu Feng’s hatred towards the Lu’s.

‘He did save our family’s squad today. Is it fair? Should I just let the past go?’ Ye Wei suddenly realized.

Chapter 168 – Depth

Ye Wei and Lu Feng went on and discussed ways they could manipulate the Lu family, and how they should keep the search teams out of the heart of North Hill Bay. After briefly agreeing, they initiated their plan and began to cultivate.

Ye Wei negotiated to retain his recently established schedule; he would train by the pond during the daytime while tracking the Lu's movements, and lastly he would kept an eye on the Ye's squad during the nights. Lu Feng would do the opposite. When either of the partners saw signs of the Lu's men nearing the Drakehead, they would set up diversions, even releasing wild beasts they captured, near the Lu's camps; as a result, Lu's men would alter their paths.

A few days time drifted past in a blink, Ye Wei had consolidated his cultivation, so that he could focus on his next breakthrough to four-star condensed prime level.

Lu Feng admired Ye Wei's cultivation speed. He was envious of the talent he saw before him. Nonetheless, he was oblivious to the fact that the Supreme's cultivating formula was in play. Ye Wei's talent didn't really affect his cultivation speed in comparison.

"Hey Lu Feng, you have been cultivating here for four years now, right? Be honest, have you ever seen the sacred mark?" Ye Wei sat next to the pond and sincerely asked Lu Feng as he was coming to the Drakehead for his turn to watch the pond..

"I tried looking for it, but I have had no luck." Lu Feng shook his head. He then pointed at the pond, "however, try going closer to the pond."

'My body is absorbing primal energy the quicker I get close to it?!' Ye Wei stared curiously at the calm surface, "could the center of the Drakehead be inside the pond?"

“I had the same exact thought. This pond looks ordinary but actually it is not.” Lu Feng spoke as he walked towards the body of water, “I have dived in many times, more than I could remember. The first hundred feet was easy to dive into, but the deeper I swam things got scary. The water below that mark was drastically colder. I felt as if my soul was freezing!” Lu Feng explained solemnly to Ye Wei.

‘Your soul was freezing? What do you mean?’ Ye Wei frowned. His face showed an air of confusion. He could see that the pond water was flowing, ‘it’s not frozen, and even if it was, a condensed prime Warrior like you could easily resist cold temperature.’

The setting sun caught Ye Wei’s attention. The Ye’s men were in North Hill Bay where frequent reports of wild beast were spotted. He began to worry about Ye Zhong’s safety.

“Lu Feng, would you mind watching over the Ye’s men just for tonight?” Ye Wei quickly glanced at the darkening sky and spoke to Lu Feng on the other side of the pond.

“Okay, just be careful though.” Lu Feng understood Ye Wei’s intention. The two could read each other much better now because they trained and saw each other everyday.

“Ye! Of course.” Ye Wei gently nodded. “We’re sitting on the Drakehead. I would like to learn more about this place. If we could find the sacred mark, we could start collecting and hiding the treasures before anyone else does.”

A sacred mark would appear in each Drakehead after a Supreme Dragon Belt’s birth. This mark, the key to unlock the Draketorsal’s treasures, was however nowhere to be found, not even by Lu Feng, a sharp young mind with a powerful body to match.

“You can relax and do your thing. I promise no beasts and no men will touch a hair on any of the Ye’s head under my watch!” Lu Feng readily assured Ye Wei. “Just remember to cut me a share if you find out where the treasures are. I don’t ask for much, just thirty percent is all.”

“Don’t worry, You can relax too! I will count you in. what am I going to

do with all the treasure anyway?” Ye Wei replied calmly. “We are working together now, so we should be fair. If we keep thinking selfishly we will never be efficient in the time of our collaboration.”

“There are no eternal enemies. As long as we can find a way to benefit each other, we should continue helping each other.”

When the night finally fell, Lu Feng left the pond. With the starlight’s guidance, he tracked down the Ye’s squad and began his duty as the silent guardian.

At the Drakehead, Ye Wei took off his robe. He grabbed a large green boulder between his arms and dove into the pond.

“Slosh!”

Ye Wei held tight onto the boulder. He rapidly sank deeper and deeper into the watery unknown, causing some turbulence in the pond.

‘I must be around hundred feet deep now.’ Ye Wei pondered. Everything was still rather normal; though, it was so dark he could not even see the boulder he was holding. However, he was still able to navigate with his extraordinary soul sensitivity.

Ye Wei continued diving down deeper into the pond. The boulder’s weight accelerated his descent. Just as he broke the hundred feet mark, a sharp, overwhelming freezing sensation attacked every inch of his skin.

“How could the water become this freezing cold just like that? This is colder than sea water during the frozen winters! How can this water even stay liquid? Ye Wei’s brows tightly locked. The three golden cracks on his dantian began vibrating and released a vast surge of Qi, filling and warming his entire body, erasing the numbness from the cold.

“There is something strange in this pond, and I need to go deeper to investigate!”

Ye Wei dived deeper and deeper while continually holding onto the weight of the boulder.

‘Hundred and ten feet!’

‘Hundred and twenty!’

Once he reached thirteen feet deep, the boulder froze. It started to shake, and in a few seconds, it was covered with cracks. Finally, the stone boulder shattered and disintegrated.

Ye Wei slightly moved from side to side. ‘It’s impossible to maneuver in this depth and temperature, even the boulder froze and cracked from the pressure!’ Ye Wei’s face was paler than ever; his lips became blue from the blistering cold. He tried to keep his body warm, but his blood flow was drastically slowing down. Somehow, even the body of a three-star condensed prime Warrior was not strong enough to combat this cold.

‘I don’t believe it! I am stronger than this!’ Ye Wei clenched his teeth even harder and drew a sequence of runes with his shaking fingers.

‘Supernova stance, first evolution!’ The golden light on Ye Wei’s bones flowed, shone through his body and lit up the pond’s frozen depths. He gained the body strength of a seven-star condensed prime Warrior.

‘I need to keep on going!’

The Qi in Ye Wei’s body was accelerating, within his meridian systems. In turn, it marginally kept up with how quickly his body was freezing.

‘One hundred and thirty feet!’

‘One hundred and forty feet!’

‘One hundred and fifty feet!’

When Ye Wei reached one hundred and fifty feet, the water temperature suddenly dropped again. His joints showed signs of freezing since the Qi flow in his meridians slowed down as well. The energy began to solidify; at the same time, Ye Wei’s skin was glowing in an unusual purple colour.

‘My body is at the same state as a seven-star condensed prime Warrior, and I still cannot resist the temperature. What is the source of this cold?’ Ye Wei narrowed his eyes.

Now, Ye Wei’s bones became rigid from layers of frost accumulating on

the surfaces of his internal organs. A dull pain throbbed over his whole body.

‘If I keep going like this, I will definitely freeze to death!’

‘Supernova stance, second evolution!’ Nevertheless, he refused to give in.

“Rumble!”

His Qi was further compressed and amplified, strengthening his body to that of a nine-star condensed prime Warrior.

‘Much better!’

Wrapped in coats of thick primal energy, Ye Wei was able to dive even deeper despite the increasing pressure.

After the second evolution, Ye Wei descended all the way to one hundred and seventy feet depth before his Qi started to solidify once again.

‘I think I am still far from the bottom!’ and I still haven’t found anything. I don’t think I can keep going on like this.’ Ye Wei shook his head and took a hard turn to the opposite direction. He swam towards the sky and the fresh air.

Once he reached about one hundred and twenty feet below the pond’s surface, Ye Wei canceled the Supernova stance and his body returned to the state of a three-star condensed prime level.

Feeling threatened by the water’s chilling temperature, Ye Wei accelerated his Qi flow to warm up his meridians and therefore his body. The quicker his Qi circulated his body the thicker and denser it eventually became.

‘The pond is bone chilling. I think I can attempt a breakthrough down here where my Qi flows quicker.’ During this time, Ye Wei was close to breaking through; how he could cultivate most efficiently was always one of his main concerns.

‘If I could breakthrough to become a four-star condensed Warrior, I

would be as strong as a ten-star condensed prime Warrior under the effect of Supernova stance second evolution!’

‘Before my next breakthrough, I am not confident about being able to defeat a ten-star condensed prime Warrior. Although Lu Zhong was heavily wounded, Ye Wei’s resources were drained. If they were to fight a longer fight, Ye Wei would not have lasted long since he put all of his strength behind the Selenic Triple-Primal Sword.

‘After my break through, my Sword stance will reach a different level entirely. When that day comes, I should be able to take on even ten-star condensed prime Warriors with the Glacial Emperor’s stances.’

‘Falling Star Form!’ Ye Wei steadied his body deep inside the pond, used the formula to further accelerate the fast-flowing Qi, the energy tamped by the cold, into his dantian.

‘I think my body is absorbing Qi twenty time faster than normal speed! My Sentient is being expanded as well by this freezing surges!’ Ye Wei exclaimed. He sincerely believed the Drakehead was close to the bottom of the pond.

‘I have to breakthrough before I am good enough for any task in my path.’ Ye Wei clenched his fist in the depth of the dark, freezing pond. He used the formula once again, this time to overload his meridians.

The silver moon hung high. It’s soft light could not reach where Ye Wei was, but it certainly acted as a torch in the dark for Lu Feng.

Lu Feng had located the Ye’s and decided he should head back to the Drakehead once he took care of the beasts around the area.

While he was on the way back to Ye Wei, he discovered that the Lu’s had assigned a ten-star condensed prime Warrior to North Hill Bay.

“Why did they assign the Du’s to Lu Ren?” Lu Feng mumbled to himself high up a tree. Incognito due to the night sky, a man near Lu Feng was inconspicuous. It took a couple of seconds before Lu Feng recognized a bearded middle-aged man near him.

“Ye Wei, the Lu’s sent another ten-star condensed prime Warrior your

way. I am not sure if I will be able to stop this one, please be aware!”

Lu Feng sent Ye Wei a message through his runic badge.

However, Ye Wei being too focused on breaking through, was not aware that Lu Feng tried to contact him.

It was not long before sunrise, Lu Feng became increasingly anxious as he still hadn't received a reply from Ye Wei. 'What are you doing, don't tell me you got yourself killed. The Lu's just sent two hundred Du's towards the Drakehead's direction! I need you right now Ye Wei!'

Chapter 169 – Four

“The Lu’s must have discovered or the Du’s have snitched on the Ye’s! Come on Ye Wei, we can’t afford you to be quiet right now!” Lu Feng could not run the distraction show on his own. North Hill Bay was not the widest stretch of land but it was large. It took the duo a lot of creativity and precise coordination from two separate locations in order to herd the search teams away from the Drakehead in the past few days.

‘Judging by these people’s decisive movement, they do have a clear target! What can I do alone!?’ Lu Feng held his runic badge tight, anxiously checking every ten seconds if Ye Wei had replied.

It was not long before Lu Feng realized he couldn’t just spectate in the dark. He ground his teeth, took a deep breath and revealed himself, “Oh Lu Ren! What are you doing here?” He said, acting surprised.

“I could ask you the same question!” Lu Ren frowned and replied. ‘What is this bastard doing here?’ He thought to himself.

“I didn’t think you were assigned to any task for this mission?” The bearded man asked, almost sounding like he was interrogating.

“Incorrect. I was ordered by Lu Zhong to watch over this area. So what brought you here? To my knowledge you were assigned to the east side.” Lu Feng smiled diplomatically and used the information he gathered to his advantage.

Lu Feng continued “I just want the elders to recognize me, so I volunteered and spoke to Lu Zhong. North Hill Bay was my playground when I was a child, I thought I could help. I was tracking a powerful wild beast nearby and came to warn you once I could sense you and your squad’s presence. But if you rather have me gone, I am happy to just mind my own business.”

Lu Feng turned around and continued in a convincingly sad tone, “It’s

discouraging sometimes when you just want the best for your family but being treated like dirt instead of being appreciated, I will be on my way. Just take care of yourselves.”

“Did you say there is a wild beast? Was it a wild beast or a pact?” Lu Ren was concerned, ‘Maybe he’d know where the nests are!’

“Lu Feng! Wait!” The rough appearance of the bearded man did not match his nervous voice. ‘If it’s a rare wild beast, I can’t deal with it while babysitting these Du idiots!’

Lu Feng was surprised by how well his hook worked. He wiped his cunning smile off his face before turning around to Lu Ren. ‘I’m glad I came through to you, I was going to ask one of the elders to deal with the rare beast if you would have ignored me...’ He then tried to remember the location of beast nest close, but there was nowhere he could think of.

Lu Feng appeared calm, but he knew there was no way he could make his lie convincing without Ye Wei.

Lu Ren looked at Lu Feng, slightly suspicious, if there were a rare wild beast around this area he had to be cautious. ‘A rare beast can wipe us all out, but shouldn’t I have been briefed about it?’

“Hahaha, Lu Feng, nephew, hold on! You are here anyway, would you lead the way for us to avoid the beast?” Lu Ren hid his cold eyes under a fake smile, just in case Lu Feng was right.

“If there is a need for my services, I will of course assist my family.” nodded Lu Feng, as he replied making himself sound as sincere as possible. ‘Hah, I’ve been waiting to say this line since a minute ago.’

Leading the way gave Lu Feng the opportunity to take Lu Ren and the Du’s squad further away from the Drakehead and also investigate how much Lu’s knew about the position of the Drakehead or if they had a clue at all.

“After you, uncle Ren!” Lu Feng led the two hundred Warriors and started walking away from the Drakehead deviated from their original route. Lu Feng was cautious, he couldn’t just lead them in the completely

opposite direction, so he had to go around, in large circles, making sure Lu Ren did not get suspicious while he took them on a sightseeing tour.

“Halt!” After about twenty or thirty miles Lu Feng was immediately stopped by Lu Ren as he was about to take a turn to make the squad go the opposite direction of where the pond was.

“Thump!” a muffled noise sounded as Lu Ren’s hand landed on Lu Feng’s shoulder, stopping him to walk further away.

Lu Feng’s heart sank, his face went pale, scared to turn around. ‘He knows!?’

“Lu Feng, nephew, you need to adjust our pathing. Of course we want to avoid the wild beast but we need to move towards that direction”, said Lu Ren and pointed towards the burial hill again. The hill that was less than ten miles away from the pond.

“Very well then”. It took all his effort to not sound nervous, while his heart was beating like crazy, ‘Do Lu’s know about this or is it just Lu Ren’s intuition? I hope it’s the latter.’

‘If it’s just Lu Ren’s senses, we can kill him and no one else will find out. But if it was the former, killing him will just trigger the Lu’s.’

Hundreds thoughts flashed through Lu Feng’s mind, pondering every possibility, trying to find a way out, ‘He is a ten-star condensed prime Warrior. Killing him will be difficult, but I think it is possible.’

‘Possible if the kid is here. What is taking him that long?’ Lu Feng got to know Ye Wei better in the few days since they made the oath. He hoped blunt stubbornness did not drown his new ally.

‘No, he should be fine. He is the most talented cultivator I’ve ever met.’ Lu Feng’s cold gaze turned towards the Du’s marching behind them, ‘When Ye Wei comes we will be able to kill Lu Ren, but that means innocent witnesses will have to die.’

‘Maybe they deserve to die. I’ve treated them well throughout the year, but now the Lu’s are here, they just completely disregarded my existence!’

Under Lu Ren's pressure, he had no other choice but to take them towards the Drakehead, marching slowly and in circles to avoid the fictional wild beast.

At the pond, the water suddenly became agitated, ripples appeared on its surface, growing bigger and bigger every second. The whole pond trembled as a huge water torrent broke the surface, flew towards the night sky carrying a dark figure.

Ye Wei stood on top of the pillar of water, protected by a bubble of Qi around him, his body was completely dry.

Schmoosch!

The water torrent suddenly exploded, filled the sky with droplets of water, as if a storm just broke out. Ye Wei kept himself in the air, levitating, a hint of smile passed across his face.

"Four-star condensed prime Warrior!" Exclaimed Ye Wei, glad to be alive and excited to have broken through. 'But let's not do that again.'

'Now, when I use the second evolution of Supernova stance, I will be able to get to the level of ten-star condensed prime Warrior easily! There won't be a lot of people below returned prime level who can rival me in strength!' Ye Wei smiled, 'I would like to see Lu Zhong try to fight me now! Ha!'

"Boom!"

Ye Wei slowly landed next to the pond and put his light blue robe on.

'I broke through in less than ten days here at the Drakehead! This place is magical!' Ye Wei could now feel a fourth crack on his silver Qi ball within his dantian, smiled joyfully.

'The Runic badge is shaking, was Master looking for me? Oh, could it be Lu Feng!' Ye Wei's low clearance meant that he could only use his badge to speak with people whose will-force was directly registered to his device. The badge allowed Runemasters to communicate using the voice transmission technique but relayed across much larger distances without the need to be in close proximity with the other person.

“Ye Wei! The Lu’s sent a ten-star condensed prime Warrior and they are approaching the Drakehead! Reply immediately as you see this!’ Ye Wei was shocked to hear panic in Lu Feng’s voice.

Ye Wei frowned, nervous, ‘The Lu’s sent a ten-star condensed prime Warrior? Wasn’t Lu Zhong responsible for this area?’

“What is the situation right now? Where are you?” Ye Wei quickly replied using the voice transmission technique through his badge.

“It’s not good. The Lu’s seem to know something. I am afraid we might need to kill Lu Ren. Are you ready?” After just a second, Ye Wei’s Runic badge shook and Lu Feng’s voice sounded in his mind.

“Lu Ren?” Ye Wei frowned, ‘He was one of the two who gave the Ye mansion a warm visit ten days ago.’

‘Lu Ren is just a ten-star condensed prime Warrior, with my current level I should be able to beat him’, thought Ye Wei, tightening his fists.

‘We cannot let the Lu’s find the Drakehead!’

“I am on my way! Good job for holding them there thus far.” said Ye Wei to his runic badge as a pair of huge wings appeared on his back. The primal feathers shook, and he sped towards the location given to him by Lu Feng.

About fifty miles away from the pond, Lu Feng, Lu Ren and two hundred Du’s kept their search in a valley.

“Uncle Ren, looking for something like this tiny in the wilderness is not an easy task. It surely cannot be done in just one night. Don’t you think we should take a break? We will be more efficient when we feel fresh!” Said Lu Feng after receiving Ye Wei’s last message.

Lu Ren glanced towards the tired faces of Du’s and slightly nodded. The treasure they were looking for was invisible to human eye, they had to spend a lot of their Qi and strength to be able to scan the surroundings for energy disruptions, which was extremely draining, but also necessary.

Having to go through the vast area during all day and most of the

night, the Du's were exhausted as they were told to sit down and sense the surrounding with their cultivation formulas every hundred feet they walked.

One of the Du's strongest Warrior, sat himself immediately on the ground after seeing Lu Ren nod to Lu Feng's suggestion and the rest followed. Breathing heavily, they took out their provisions, dried meat and flasks of water, to regain some strength and rest.

The owls were hooting in the forests around the valley, the moonlight casted shadows on the ground. Lu Feng also sat himself down, his eyes slightly squinted, his sharp sense registered the tiniest disturbance in his surroundings

'Ye Wei is nearby!'

Through the runic badge Lu Feng could guess that Ye Wei would be arriving and would be hiding behind the nearby woods. Lu Feng took a deep breath, stood up, took out a flask of wine and with a fake smile on his face walked towards Lu Ren.

Lu Feng took a gulp of wine and offered the flask, "Wine?"

"No." Lu Ren shook his head.

"Fine by me!" Lu Feng smiled, pretended to be embarrassed by the decline and drank flask empty in mere seconds.

"Good wine!"

Lu Feng wiped his mouth and tossed the flask away.

Lu Ren did not suspect anything, sat himself down comfortably to rest.

The broken bottle was the signal for Ye Wei. He agreed to ambush Lu Ren while Lu Feng would deal with two hundred Du Warriors.

"Clang!"

The flask hit the ground and shattered into small pieces. A crisp loud noise echoed through the valley.

Chapter 170 – Spirit Flame

Lu Feng turned into a phantom; he rushed towards the Du's two hundred strong men, whizzed through them, and left trails of countless rune sequences in the air.

“Mountain Grasp!” Lu Feng struck without warning. He summoned huge boulders in the shape of a fist, which fell from the sky right onto the Du's. Some of them were still relaxing and sitting down; and even though, they noticed the sudden attack, they were too slow and exhausted to react.

“Rumble! Rumble! Rumble!”

The giant boulders fell on the two hundred warriors. A quarter of them were immediately crushed by the stance. Lu Feng was a peak four-star condensed prime Warrior, and he used all of his strength by trying to eliminate the Du's all at once. Most of them were lucky enough to escape the first wave of such a powerful and unpredictable attack.

“Lu Feng, are you out of your mind?!” Lu Ren widened his eyes in disbelief. “I don't like those dogs either, but they are our family's dogs!”

Over half of the Du's died within seconds of the impact. “What have you done?!” Lu Ren was too slow to react. He could not defend the Du's. Furiously he casted his cold eyes onto Lu Feng. Grunting, he quickly drew runes around himself and turned into a lightning bolt, leaving zig-zags in the dark sky.

Lu Feng's attack was too unpredictable. Even Lu Ren was unable to read the stance in time not to mention the slower and less powerful Du's.

“Stop right now or I will break your limbs!” Lu Ren rushed towards Lu Feng, but his path was suddenly blocked by another figure.

“Ye Wei?!” Lu Ren's lips twitched. His eyes opened wide in awe and confusion. ‘Why are you defending Lu Feng!?’

“Just when I thought you were loyal to us, Lu Feng! Thanks for the demonstration of your betrayal!” Lu Ren roared furiously as he figured out Lu Feng was hiding something with the aid of Ye Wei, “I will torture you until you tell me what is happening!”

His rage passed through his body as he looked down at the smashed corpses of the Du’s; a great surge of powerful Qi burst from his hands and turned into an energy tornado.

The Qi storm swept the ground, the earth cracked in a spider web pattern, and shook the whole valley violently.

‘Lu Ren is much stronger than Lu Zhong!’ Lu Feng’s face suddenly changed as he felt the Lu Ren’s strike grow stronger; he looked worriedly towards Ye Wei, wondering, ‘will this kid be able to defeat him?’

‘Oh well, now there was no turning back. We have to kill all of them. No one can escape; it’s us or them, all or nothing!’

“Take care of the remaining Du’s! I will handle this!” Ye Wei looked quickly towards Lu Feng. His words gave the exiled great assurance.

The runes on Ye Wei’s bones glowed bright, another monstrous burst of Qi swept the valley.

‘What was that? Just a few weeks ago he showed the strength of a nine-star condensed prime Warrior. How did he break through?! I don’t understand. How can this be?’ Lu Feng’s jaws dropped as his body shivered in the dense force-wave emitted by Ye Wei.

‘This kid is just unpredictable in every way!’ Lu Feng was scared of his ally, but he knew there was no time to spare. He produced nine energy globes with another stance.

The balls of Qi turned into nine shadows and surrounded the escaping flocks of Du’s men, quickly killing them off one by one.

“No, you are not running away! Not under my watch!”

Lu Feng was effectively cleaning up the dispersed flock, eliminating the defenseless and panicking Du’s. Meanwhile, Ye Wei was standing against

Lu Ren on his own.

‘I need to be quick!’ Ye Wei waved his hands, ten blades of Peerless Qi words burst out from the tip of his fingers. ‘There are more squads around North Hill Bay if they hear or sense anything we won’t survive.’

The Peerless Sword Qi blades was a powerful technique on its own, now, that Ye Wei had the strength of a ten-star condensed prime Warrior. The edge of these blades could easily penetrate the Qi armor of Lu Ren even that they were both at the same cultivation level.

Lu Ren’s eyes flashed with terror. He never expected such power to come from a sixteen year old.

“Buzz!”

The blades were approaching Lu Ren. Nevertheless, he did not underestimate his opponent. ‘I have to treat him as someone one of my own level or I might die.’ His hands started dancing in circles, strands of complex, curved rune sequences appeared and in just a second a shadowy object emerged from the nether.

“Boom!”

In just a blink of an eye, a huge eight cornered prism was created from his Qi. The sharp edges and mirrored sides were reflecting the moonlight, emitting an immense wave of Qi.

The dark prism encaged Lu Ren’s body, all ten of Ye Wei’s Qi Swords were sucked towards the mirrors on prism sides.

The Qi Swords struck onto the smooth mirror but the prism didn’t shatter, instead the swords were stuck onto shining surface. The mirror trapped them like quicksand, nullifying Ye Wei’s attack.

Lu Ren slowly exhaled and hid behind the large spectral prism. He felt relieved that he was able to defend himself. ‘This kid is very strong!’ He thought as he recuperated from the stress brought by the Peerless Sword Qi.

‘Lu Ren is afterall a ten-star condensed prime Warrior. I shouldn’t

expect to kill him right away. At least I pressured him enough, so he already spent a lot of Qi!’ Ye Wei told himself as he finished drawing the runes for his next strike.

Ye Wei had another card up his sleeve, the peak high-level Myst stance. He had been practising it for the past three years and even though it still wasn’t perfected, he needed it to be able to kill Lu Ren.

Ye Wei needed time to prepare for his ace, therefore he used the Peerless Qi Swords to keep Lu Ren busy, as he did not want the ten-star Warrior to use a flare scroll while he drew the runes for Selenic Triple-Primal Sword.

If Lu Ren used his scroll, everything would be over. Ye Wei, Lu Feng and even the entire Ye family would not survive the Lu’s family wrath.

“Rumble!”

Ye Wei injected his Qi into the sequence. The runes turned into a constellation-shaped network, flew high up in the sky, and lit up the whole valley. It then transformed into a three feet long sharp-edged sword.

“Die!” Ye Wei pointed his finger towards his opponent and yelled. His cold voice sent chills over Lu Ren’s body. The Qi Sword surrounded by star constellations rushed towards the enemy all at once at an incredible speed.

Supported by Ye Wei’s amplified Qi, the long ancient sword’s energy presence was twice as strong as when he used it before the recent breakthrough.

Lu Ren gasped in panic, as the sword closed its distance from him. A hundred feet wide pit appeared around his body and kept growing as the sword fell lower. The stance created a large web of fissures as it dug the pit deeper and wider.

“This Sword stance is a high-level myst stance!” Lu Ren was standing right in the middle of the pit. His face lost all of its colour, surprised by incredible strength of Ye Wei’s attack.

“Rumble!”

The long Qi Sword with hundreds of runic constellations reached its target. It seemed to everyone at the valley that the whole world shook. A dusty smoke cloud shrouded the space, and thunderclouds emerged in the night sky. Ye Wei's attack just created a storm.

“Ye Wei's sword attracted the violent energy of nature!”

“A sixteen year old boy's Qi did all of this?! Even the strongest youngster in my Family, Lu Fan, didn't reach this level at the same age!” Lu Ren heart was filled with horror as he felt and saw what Ye Wei was capable of.

Lu Fan wasn't just a strongest youngster in the Lu family, but also the strongest in the whole Qing State. He was known all across Zhou dynasty's reign for being smart and powerful, a true genius. But even he was not capable of using a stance of this scale at the age of sixteen.

“He is way stronger than Lu Fan! How is this even possible?!”

Lu Ren did not expect such a small city like Green Moon to be the birthplace of a terrifying genius. ‘I didn't think anyone outside of the three royal families could be this strong, this young...’

To maximize the Selenic Sword's destructive power Ye Wei used the Falling Star form, and guided the primal energy from the surroundings into his strike. ‘Falling Star form became a lot stronger since I started training at the Drakehead...’ He thought.

Few Du's that were trying to flee from the valley were stunned by the Qi storm, swept off their feet. They knew their doom was near, trembled in fear, ‘How could he be so strong?!’

“I remember him! He was the joke between martial families, the red Sentient Student who everyone! What did they feed him?!” The remaining Du's finally realised what a big mistake they made to mess with the Ye family.

In their last moments they hated Lu Feng for turning the Du's against the Ye family three years ago, frustrated that now he was wiping out the

Du's with a Ye, oblivious about the fact that they were just collateral damage.

"This guy! He doesn't really need me here!" Lu Feng also saw the Qi storm created by Ye Wei's stance. He was glad that they didn't remain enemies.

Ye Wei's intense glare fell onto Lu Ren.

"No survivors!" Ye Wei channeled his whole strength, all his Qi went into the Qi Sword that he held so tight.

The sword's size made the strike look much slower than it was. Lu Ren saw the sword's trail but couldn't react in time. It landed right onto the spectral prism.

"Crack! Crack!" The prism cracked from where the ten sword struck, quickly shattering under the pressure of Ye Wei's stance.

"I've underestimated him!" Lu Ren widened his eyes in shock.

The raging Qi was pressing against Lu Ren, his pupils shrunk to the size of a needle's tip. It was too late to defend himself with a stance. His ten-star condensed prime cultivation level was useless against Ye Wei's speed. Instead he took a few scrolls out of his sleeve and immediately tore all of them.

Screens of runes appeared around Lu Ren, forming numerous defensive stances.

However, put before the edge of the long Qi Sword, Lu Ren's last line of defense was almost non-existent. Although slowed by the layers, the sharp edge managed to pierce through all of the protective stances. Lu Ren helplessly watched as it mercilessly burrowed into his body.

"Plop!" Lu Ren's face was pale as a piece of paper, his blood gushed out from his mouth and the bone deep wounds on his body.

Bones were broken, flesh was torn, Lu Ren was covered in blood, barely alive. Although the sword was strong, the defensive stances did absorb a fraction of the sword's momentum.

Ye Wei was levitating, staring at Lu Ren from above. He was panting, his face pale. Even under the effect of supernova stance second evolution, his Qi and will force were drained from using this devastating sword strike.

“Ye Wei! Stop!”

Lu Feng leaped forth, landed next to Lu Ren before Ye Wei was going to finish his opponent.

“What? Are you changing sides again?” Ye Wei was confused.

“In the Lu family, once a cultivator reaches ten-star condensed prime level, they will be asked to light up a candle light in the clan’s ancestral hall.”

“If the cultivator dies, the fire will die, and the smoke of the dying flame will become the image of what the deceased cultivator saw before death.” Lu Feng looked at Ye Wei and said.

“That was close... Couldn’t you have told me this earlier? My family could be wiped out because of this!” Ye Wei sighed as he pulled back his fist.

Chapter 171 – No Survivors

“Before we kill any Lu’s who are above ten-star condensed prime level, we have to take care of a spirit token.” Lu Feng explained while taking a small, green sandalwood box out of his bag.

Lu Feng then reached into Lu Ren’s inside pocket and found what he was looking for, “this sandalwood box can temporarily disrupt the link between the spirit flame in the ancestral hall and the token these Lu’s carry.” He held the small, glowing jade token up high, so Ye Wei could see it.

“You, you cannot kill me!” Lu Ren coughed up blood. His eyes were filled with fear even though he made that bold statement.

Lu Feng curled his lips up and carefully placed the spirit token into the wooden box. His gaze became ice cold. “This is only the beginning.”

“Bang!” The next second, Lu Feng’s fist was inside his uncle’s chest; blood spattered everywhere, especially on Lu Feng. Even at this gruesome, Lu Feng’s bloodstained smile only grew larger.

Ye Wei was not told what exactly the Lu family did to Lu Feng’s mother but from his new partner’s twisted face he could see how much it horribly affected Lu Feng.

“How are we going to do this?” Ye Wei thought. He looked at Lu Feng and could feel the darkness in his partner’s heart, ‘he can see a few steps ahead of me in many things, but I don’t know if I can be friends with him in the long term.’

Ye Wei was not going to leave anything to chance. “The Lu’s cannot know anything about tonight!”

“The sandalwood box works for a month. We’ll say the Du’s were ambushed by wild beasts. In Lu Ren’s case, he had gone missing since the attack.” Lu Feng scanned across the corpses covering the valley’s

ground. He spoke coldly.

“Okay.” Ye Wei nodded and mumbled to himself. “A month? What about after that? You know the Lu’s are efficient. They will eventually trace it back to us.”

“I know what you are thinking, but we can’t do much more.” Lu Feng looked at Ye Wei, explaining solemnly. “We should instead be thinking about how we can deceive the Lu’s. They were obviously heading to the Drakehead’s direction.”

“They don’t really care about the Du’s, but if they have an idea where the Drakehead is, they will keep sending stronger cultivators there, especially now that Lu Ren is ‘missing’.” Lu Feng paused and continued, “they might even send the returned prime Warriors this way! If worse comes to worst, we will have to let them take the Drakehead for now. Then we would somehow trap and eradicate them at once.”

“I don’t know if that is good idea. They will just become stronger if they take control over the Drakehead. I think I have a way to deal with the returned prime level elders. Will you go and spy on the Lu’s while I prepare myself?” Ye Wei frowned as he spoke. He lifted his head and looked at the frustrated Lu Feng.

“There is no way back now. We should get ahead instead of wasting time to cover our tracks.” Ye Wei clenched his fist and said, “the next few days are critical, so make sure you gather as much information as you can!”

“Okay, I will be on my way!” Ye Wei channeled his Qi. He flapped his primal feather wings and rushed towards the Drakehead pond.

“We are still in the dark. We will have slight advantage since the element of surprise is on our side. We just have to be careful, so the Lu’s don’t know what we are putting into action!”

Lu Feng watched his partner flying away. There was a glint of hope in his eyes. “Please, win this bet. We will all die if we lose.”

Lu Feng understood that he could not take on the Lu’s soon even if he

spent all his time training and cultivating. On the other hand, he knew Ye Wei could. ‘He’s right though. With my identity, I can get more information than he.’ The heavenly oath they made gave him assurance. After arranging the crime scene to look like the aftermath of a wild beast attack, Lu Feng sped towards the Lu’s base.

A few hours after the incident, two of the Lu’s condensed prime Warriors investigated the area around North Hill Bay.

“What in the world! What the hell is with Lu Ren?! He was suppose to send someone back to base. He knows better than to be this irresponsible!”

“I know right? This is just outrageous!”

A stinking metallic smell caught both the Warriors’ attention. They frowned and entered the bloodstained valley. Both of them began to shake in fear as they found the source of the reeking, overwhelming stench. They saw bits of stomach-turning, ravaged bodies covering the ground together with a few beasts’ dead bodies.

“What the hell happened here!?”

“Where is Lu Ren?!”

They investigated the valley thoroughly but could not find Lu Ren’s body.”

“You don’t see him either?”

“No, but even if he is here, I don’t think we’d be able to recognize him..”

“The beast might still be around. We have to be on our feet! Let’s go back!” One of the condensed prime Warrior said, “if Lu Ren couldn’t deal with it, neither can we!”

After doing a brief headcount, the two warriors nervously left the way they came.

Green Moon City, City Lord’s castle.

Two returned prime Warriors were sitting still, cultivating. One of them

was thin while the other chubby. They were both cultivating using the Lu's specialized formula. When they inhaled, large vacuum bubbles formed around them, and when they exhaled a faint thundering rumble echoed the whole courtyard.

"Sir, A large pack of wild beasts attacked the Lu Ren's squad. There were no survivors! As well, Lu Ren was missing!" The two condensed prime level scouts reported. They shivered as they remembered what they saw.

"Did I hear you correctly? No survivors you said?!" The chubby elder's eyes became bloodshot. Both scouts immediately bowed down, avoided eye contact, and became tongue tied under the immense pressure.

The thinner elder also opened his eyes. He interrogated with his cold voice. "That can't be right. Lu Ren could have used a flare scroll. He knows better than to die without warning the others. Did you two see anything else?"

The scouts shook their heads; they were too scared to talk.

"Exactly, someone is trying to mess with our mission." The chubby elder murmured to himself. He then rose his voice and ordered to the scouts, "send a message to the family. I want someone to check on Lu Ren's spirit flame. I need to know who is responsible for this as soon as possible! Assemble a team to search for Lu Ren. I want him in front of me in a day! Dead or alive!"

"Sir, how about the search? Should we keep looking for the Drakehead before finding out who is behind this?" One of the scouts gathered his courage and spoke up.

"Keep running the search!? Brother, do you mind overwatching the base alone while I lead the search team into North Hill Bay myself!" The chubby elder narrowed his eyes. He replied to the scout slowly but aggressively, "the council said they are pretty certain that the Drakehead is close to the bay area. Now, this incidence might be the proof of their assumption."

"Be careful, it could have been an inside job." Said the thinner elder.

He then nodded and thought, 'I have to lock this city down. There will be chaos if the other big families find out about the Drakehead!'

Since Ye Wei returned to the Drakehead, he had been cultivating deep down in the pond in its freezing water. Like all condensed prime Warriors, he was able to stay in water for an extensive period of time. He cultivated non-stop for five days; he refreshed for a lungful of air every few hours.

Now that he was able to use his will-force and the Qi in his meridians being condensed by the cold water, he could speed up the Falling Star form even more. His body efficiently absorbed and purified the energy that came from the bottom of the pond.

Within five days of intensive training Ye Wei's cultivation level quickly escalated. He was close to a five-star condensed prime level. After the breakthrough, he would be able to have the body strength of a peak ten-star condensed prime Warrior under the effect of his Supernova stance second evolution.

'When I breakthrough, I should be able to fight two ten-star condensed prime Warrior at the same time!'

"Slosh!"

A pillar of water broke through the surface. Ye Wei shortly followed.

"It shouldn't be long now before I am a five-star condensed prime Warrior, but how should I do it?" Ye Wei stood by the pond, muttering to himself. His body had been filled with Qi for days, but he could not find an opportunity to advance.

He decided to take his mind off cultivating and study the Zodiac Sword stance instead. Ye Wei pointed his fingers at the pond, thirty six Qi swords nimbly flew across the pond's calm surface akin to a group of dragonflies.

"These Qi swords are looking better and better!" Ye Wei proudly exclaimed. His tightened face smiled while looking at the ripples.

'These Qi swords' movements are unpredictable. I can easily catch a

ten-star condensed prime Warrior off guard if I find the right timing to use them.' Ye Wei closed his eyes to simulate a fight.

'The Selenic Sword is still more powerful. However, if I have to fight a group of enemies, the Qi swords would be more effective.' He waved his arms around, ordering the Qi swords to accelerate and curve; in his imagination, he shredded his i opponents into pieces.

Chapter 172 - Five

“What’s the situation?” Ye Wei spoke using Runic badge. Ye Wei and Lu Feng had not seen each other for a few days, but they kept updating each other.

The badge in Ye Wei’s hand gently vibrated. Lu Feng’s voice sounded in his head. “I am safe here at the Lu’s, but one of the returned prime level elders is missing, and reliable sources informed me that they are sending *eight* ten-star condensed prime Warriors from the headquarters to Green Moon City for reinforcement.”

Lu Feng’s voice conveyed his anxiousness, “I assume they will be going straight to North Hill Bay.”

“Eight of them...” Ye Wei grumbled and frowned. He was tightly clenching onto the Runic Badge. ‘I can deal with one but eight of them!? I don’t think I am prepared for that.’

“A returned prime Warrior is missing?” Ye Wei felt slightly concerned. His mind was clouded by the potential threats. ‘I have to breakthrough before any of them enter the North Hill Bay area; or else, I’m afraid their arrival will be the end of our mission.’

Ye Wei paused and continued, “how about the Du’s? How did they react after learning about their people’s deaths?”

Lu Feng heard a noise close to him. After moving to a quieter spot, he replied. “The Du’s? Pfft, I will deal with the Du’s. Don’t worry about that for now. They didn’t link it to the Ye’s; your family is fine!”

His gaze became cold. ‘Since three years ago, the Du family knew more than they should have. I guess I have to take them out altogether just to be safe.’

After briefly bidding their farewells, Ye Wei put his badge back into his inside pocket and continued practising the Peerless Sword Qi. When

dawn arose and dyed the sky orange again, Ye Wei jumped into the water to cultivate again.

“Time is of the essence!” Ye Wei thought to himself. He was feeling insecure. He wondered whether the Lu’s would send their elites to North Hill Bay, and he suspected the returned prime Warrior was also on his way.

While Ye Wei was cultivating; he trying his best to breakthrough. The news of Lu Ren being missing, and the Du’s death spread quickly in Green Moon City.

Of course, the citizens all believed it was the result of a wild beast attack. They all surmised a pact of powerful, vicious rare beasts were involved. The wild beasts’ attack logically explained the state of the Du’s when they were found and the disappearance of Lu Ren. All the martial family squads sent to search North Hill Bay felt nervous and demoralized. They were too scared to even enter the woods. Every time they heard the howling wind, they flinched thinking a beast would come and attack them.

After a few days of regrouping and planning, the Lu’s interrupted the awkward atmosphere lingering in Green Moon City. Their reinforcement, eight ten-star condensed prime Warriors, were immediately deployed to the North Hill Bay area by the Lu’s elder based in the City Lord’s castle. The Lu’s reinstatement of authority restored the locals’ confidence.

Now that the Lu’s had over thirty condensed prime Warriors, in total, patrolling the North Hill Bay area including the local martial families’ cultivators, the Lu’s could actually manage a high-grade rare beast attack.

All the squads eventually overcame their fear. They became more efficient in their search again, feeling safe under the watch of the extra eight ten-star Warriors.

“Finally! They are here!” Lu Feng stood high up on a tree. He was watching the Lu’s condensed prime Warriors from a distance. Despair appeared in his eyes.

‘All eight ten-star condensed prime Warriors, and their puppets are heading to the Drakehead’s direction!’ Lu Feng was feeling more and more helpless. ‘I don’t see how Ye Wei can deal with all of them.’

‘They are covering this area as if Lu Zhong doesn’t exist. I guess it makes sense. The two elders in charge of the operation here won’t be happy if Lu Yong’s brother gets all the credit for uncovering the Drakehead.’ Lu Feng smiled bitterly and mumbled to himself, “four weeks... No, two weeks at most until they will find the pond or in less than half a month at this rate.”

“I cannot just give up like this!” He bit his lips. “Dad might be able to buy me more time!”

Since Lu Feng began cultivating by the pond, he saw the Drakehead area as his own hideout and became attached. He knew better than to let his emotion takeover, however. He began to look for other ways out. He was ready to put his pride down for a greater cause. ‘Eight more ten-star condensed prime Warriors, the Lu’s are using all the stronger cultivators in the region! Who can I count on now?’

Ye Wei was fifty feet deep in the pond, cultivating, he felt the badge vibrating, took it out and activated it with his will-force. Lu Feng’s grave voice sound in his mind.

“Ye Wei, the Lu’s men are here, We don’t have more than half a month. They will find the Drakehead in three weeks time at most if we don’t do something now to slow them down. I can confirm they have sent eight extra ten-star condensed prime Warriors to North Hill Bay!” Lu Feng held his Runic Badge and spoke urgently. “With this many powerful cultivators, they will be able to secure the Drakehead. We will have no way to regain control of the pond once they found it and figured out what it is!”

“Also, in a month’s time the sandalwood box is going to stop working. When Lu Ren’s jade token reconnects with his spirit candle flame, the Lu’s will know about his death and North Hill Bay will be swarmed with their force.”

‘Half a month. I have to be prepared in half a month. I have the iron talisman fully charged, but I need more than that to fight that many!’ Ye Wei thought of the vermilion runes, thought about the Glacial Temple, but soon realized he did not have enough time to seek solutions from these directions while he had to improve his cultivation as quickly as possible.

‘Cultivating here means I am absorbing and processing primal energy twenty times than usual, but that is not enough.’ Ye Wei looked down into the darkness as he thought to himself.

It was clear to him since he investigated the pond that the deeper he was, the quicker his body absorbs the surrounding energy. He also worked out that forty-five feet was his body’s limit without Supernova stance.

‘The runes are ready.’ Ye Wei ground his teeth, and activated the amplification stance, to endure pain and cultivate in the blistering cold was the most efficient way to become stronger.

“Bang”

The rumbling burst of Qi was muffled by the water pressure, Ye Wei swam downwards, carried by the water current his stance created.

Sixty feet.

Ninety feet.

Hundred and twenty feet.

‘This is the limit!’ The cold and the pressure stung every inch of Ye Wei’s skin, his lips were turning purple and his body began to shiver.

‘The Supernova stance will only last half an hour, I will have to think of a way to make the best out of it.’ Ye Wei closed his eyes, used the Falling Star form in the dark and quiet.

Ye Wei was trying to push his cultivation speed, surprised to know how much quicker he was it was now for him to fill up his meridian space. ‘Thirty-three times quicker!’

“Ten days, with this speed I will definitely breakthrough!” Ye Wei’s eyes shone a determined glint. ‘If I become a five-star Warrior my, the Peerless Qi Sword should work effectively even if I have to fight eight ten-star condensed prime Warriors on my own, given that I use the stance under the second evolution’s effect.

Excited by the possibilities, Ye Wei began to train non-stop with a new interval, half an hour at hundred and twenty feet under, two hours at forty-five feet and finally half an hour of resting and consolidating his cultivation on land.

On the seventh day of training, Ye Wei could feel the significance of his intense routine, he felt the Qi in his body did not only get denser, but also warmer.

His Qi eventually burst out. Span around his body, creating a vigorous whirlpool in the otherwise calm body of water.

“Bang!”

Ye Wei could feel his Sentient expanding, the excruciating pain was twisting his face. The Mystic Mount presence shone bright, helped processing the energy surges Ye Wei overloaded himself with.

Three days before schedule, Ye Wei had broke through with the extra compression he pushed upon himself.

The Progenitor had be watching all along, thought that he had to let the clan know about the threat somehow, as one of the best human cultivators he had encountered in terms of cultivating speed.

‘Five-star condensed prime level!’ The exhaustion on Ye Wei’s face vanished, replaced by an air of curiosity. ‘Now I can see how deep this pond goes!’ His eyes shone bright as he said.

The last time Ye Wei heard from Lu Feng, he was told that the Lu’s were sacrificing speed for thoroughness, and that it would have taken the Lu’s one more week until they reach the pond. Ye Wei was therefore realatively relaxed, knew that he had until the night to consolidate his cultivation. And then he could tell Lu Feng the good news, plan how they

should work to slow the Lu's.

‘I just broke though, there is nothing much I can do on the cultivation end that will make a more powerful fighter, I should be at peak ten-star condensed prime level when I use Supernova stance.’ Ye Wei thought to himself, calculating. ‘However the second evolution is not going to do a lot now.’

‘Even if I become a six or even seven-star condensed prime Warrior, the amplification effect won't be able to push me through to returned prime Warrior level.’

Condensed prime Warriors' Qi, silvery ball in their dantian and their life energy will transform once they breakthrough to become a returned prime Warrior.

While the Qi of Warriors and condensed prime Warriors glow silver, returned prime Warriors' Qi glow gold. The latter is ten times denser.

That difference separated the combat power of returned prime Warriors to the lower ranked. Cultivators.

‘I will need to evolve the Supernova stance again to make an impact, I will not be able to deal with the Lu's elders in charge in Green Moon City otherwise.’

Pu Yuan had once told Ye Wei that he it will take more than ten years for him to learn the third Supernova stance evolution. However, when Ye Wei's body went through great pressure when he was struck by a demon king, during which the eighty percent of the runes on his bones were transformed.

Ye Wei revisited his memories, of how strong Commander Shi and Ning City's Lord Chen were. ‘I will study the Supernova stance now, that is the only way, to possess the power a returned prime Warrior! Even just for thirty minutes!’

Chapter 173 - Supreme Palace

‘The deeper I dive into the pond, the stronger the pressure will be, together with the freezing cold, I should be able to compress my Qi enough. Then I will use the Falling Star form at full speed to heat up my body, my meridians should be able to expand that way! I’m just going to try it!’ Ye Wei’s eyes shone a glimmer of determination, he activated the runes on his bones, his Qi amplified, strengthened his body to ten-star condensed prime level.

Ten-star Runemaster, Master Yi, South Star Academy’s principal Gu Qing and the City Lord were the strongest cultivators in Green Moon City, all three of them were peak ten-star condensed prime Warriors.

Now Ye Wei could consistently use the Supernova stance second evolution, he had joined the three in terms of combat power, there were only a handful of cultivators below return prime level that could threaten him.

‘I really need a hot bath after this!’ Ye Wei thought to himself as he dove in.

With the aid of Spindrift Steps, Ye Wei focused on shielding his body, navigated the deeper parts of the pond with relative ease.

‘Hundred and twenty feet!’

‘Hundred and thirty feet!’

‘Two hundred and fifty feet!’

‘Am I finally at the bottom?’ The freezing temperature caused Ye Wei’s muscles to spasm, he ground his teeth and sped up his Qi flow. So his body does not stiffen up. The water current Ye Wei’s Qi flow created stirred up the sand and mud at the pond’s bed.

‘This pressure is vast, but it’s still nothing comparing to the demon

king's grip, I need more pressure on my body, this will not compress the runes on my bones enough to transform them.' Ye Wei's thought, his feet were touching the soft, muddy pond bed.

'Eh? What is that?' A faint blue light caught his attention. Surrounded in darkness, a spark of hope lit up in Ye Wei's mind.

After a few propelling strokes, Ye Wei was only an arm's length away from the luminant blue pebbles that lit up the dark depth.

'So this is the real Drakehead!?' Ye Wei frowned, examined the bright pebbles that covered pond bed, the freezing cold and the crushing water pressure felt less agonizing now his focus had been shifted.

'I should try cultivating right here!' Ye Wei sat himself on the bottom of the pond, the vast energy in his body weighed him down, he couldn't tell if he was shivering from the cold or the excitement.

'I am cultivating nearly forty times quicker than usual, just one day of cultivating here makes up for more than a month of training anywhere else!'

'If I can stay here all the time I can even become a returned prime Warrior in merely a week.' Ye Wei shook his head and thought, 'only if the Supernova stance's effect could last longer...'

'Could this be the scared mark?'

Ye Wei swam around to investigate but nothing really stood out.

'But I can't get any deeper, where is the Dreakhead if this isn't it!?' Ye Wei thought to himself, confused.

'Eh?' While feeling frustrated, Ye Wei felt a turbulence of chilling water crashing onto his back.

He looked behind, to the left, realized the current came from a two meters wide crack at the corner of the pond 'There is a tunnel!' Ye Wei's eyes brightened up, eager to find out what what was at the other end.

'I have to hurry!' Ye Wei grit his teeth, ignore the cold and swam slithered into the confined space like an eel.

The pressure increased and the temperature dropped even lower as he reached further into the tunnel. The runes on his bones were wiggling, shining gold and the remaining tadpole shaped patterns were turning into yin yang shapes.

‘This is it! I can come down here to evolve the Supernova runes after I’ve rested!’ Ye Wei thought to himself as he felt the vibration from the transforming energy on his bones.

‘What is that?’ Ye Wei had reached the end of the tunnel, he could see a chamber in front of him, made visible by the same shade of blue glow as the pebbles on pond’s bottom.

But instead of pebbles, he could see a ten feet tall, thirty feet wide small palace. The bricks and stones were covered by algae and mud, dimmed out the ghostly blue glow.

‘This building is draining the heat, I can feel it!’

Ye Wei shivered, his veins were becoming purple, his muscles tightened up, his jaw was shaking, a knocking sound went through his skull.

‘I can’t get closer!’ Ye Wei wanted to evolve his Supernova stance but he knew better than to damage his body irreversibly by the freezing cold.

The nine hundred feet between him and the building structure was so close but yet so far.

‘I need to know what I am looking at!’ Ye Wei was determined though in agony, he waved his palm, sent forth a dense Qi strike.

“Bang!”

A compressed water current flowed quickly from Ye Wei’s hand to the palace, ridding the vegetation and dirt off the blue structure.

“Rumble!”

The burst of water revealed the blue runic engravings, the temple resembled a runicle, only larger and the rune sequences were more complex.

‘Supreme Yu Palace! The name Ye Yu does ring a bell!’ Ye Wei read the

letters on the entrance and thought to himself, 'this is the Drakehead, there is no mistaking!'

Ye Wei was eager to explore but he could not deal with the cold, he could only look at the palace from distance. ‘

‘Supernova stance’s effect is fading, it’s a shame I can’t train here any longer...’ He knew he would have to rest before he could dive down again. Ye Wei gave the palace a last glance before finding his way back out and up.

“Slosh!”

Ye Wei broke through the pond’s surface, the splash of water refracted the setting sun, projected a colour spectrum onto his cheek/

Ye Wei’s runic badge was twinkling, notifying him about Lu Feng’s message.

‘Wei, I can’t doing anything now, they have developed a method to track energy disturbance, it will not be long before they figure out the Drakehead's location.

Ye Wei frowned after he processed Lu Feng’s words, ‘we have to act now, before they tell their superiors, otherwise we won’t have a way to protect the spot when they send even more reinforcement.’

“Lu Feng, I need you to come to the pond now, so that we can make a move tonight!” Ye Wei sent the message through his badge.

“Are you sure about this? We will have to deal with *eight* ten-star condensed prime Warriors and some weaker cultivators also at condensed prime level! Ye Wei, this is a serious matter, and there will be no going back if we decide to fight them. Since they have not found the place yet, shouldn’t we wait a little longer? We are still not strong enough.” Lu Feng’s voice was shaking, he was nervous and it could be heard even through the badge.

Lu Feng shook his head on the other side. ‘I’ve told him that all eight of them are stronger than Lu Ren, why is he acting so stubborn?’

“You have defeated Lu Ren swiftly but that drained everything out of you, that was a week ago, have you even recovered yet?”

“No more waiting, we will do it tonight! I told you, it had been all or nothing ever since we decided to kill Lu Ren and the Du’s.” Ye Wei’s determined voice came through the badge again, ‘I have not been training so I could watch while they raid my family’s sacred place. With my Qi at peak ten-star condensed prime level, I can fight many at once or even win if we manage to set up an ambush.’

“Okay then, if you say so! I will be on my way!” Lu Feng put away the runic badge and rushed towards the pond.

Although the duo had made a heavenly oath and decided to work as a team, the leading role had been shifting towards Ye Wei without either of them noticing.

Lu Feng arrived at the pond to see Ye Wei calmly sitting on the grass, resting, after a brief moment he broke the silence.

“Ye Wei so what is the plan?” Lu Feng could not wipe the concern off his face although his partner seemed at peace. “Or do you have a plan at all?! You might lose your life!”

“Calm down, I am not stupid, I will not risk our lives,” Ye Wei patted Lu Feng’s shoulder, smiled and said: “We will attack from the dark, they will not even know who we are if we execute my plan correctly.”

Chapter 174 - Ambush

"Okay," Lu Feng grunted and asked, "what do you need me to do? I just want to clarify that I am not willing to die for this. I know I am not strong enough to help." He was sure he would just become a burden in combat with the Lu's powerful reinforcement.

"We are an alliance. I know I should be encouraging you right now, but I think your decision to fight them is questionable." He continued, "well, frankly, I would say recklessness even."

"I do not expect you to help fight them off; that part is fine. However, I will need you to keep a lookout for me. If you see any danger from a distance while I am attacking, I need you to send me a message on the badge," Ye Wei spoke each word clearly. "Of course, you can fight them if you feel confident; but it needs to be done as cleanly as possible. Whether it be an escape or an ambush, we cannot let them know who we are!"

"I will just kill as many as possible, make them panic, use the element of surprise, and deter them from communicating with one another."

Ye Wei paused for a while. He watched the ripples spread on the pond's surface as the breeze swept across. "What about Lu Ren, have you heard anything from the returned prime level elders?" Lu Feng frowned, "actually, this could be a trap. Maybe they want to lure the people responsible for his disappearance with the reinforcement?"

"That's not possible; they are suspecting something yes. However, as long as they cannot confirm Lu Ren's death, they have better things to worry about. You have to remember they are managing the Lu's all around the area," Lu Feng snorted and chuckled, "we have another week before the sandalwood box's effect wears off."

Lu Feng placed his hand onto his chest to check the box was still in his possession. "After his spirit flame dies down, we will have a few days

before the news reaches Green Moon City. Only then should we worry about the two elders."

"If they do find out about Lu Ren's death, do you think they will interfere?" Ye Wei paused slightly and then asked.

"The two returned prime level elders only care about the Drakehead. They will probably see Lu Ren's death as a necessary sacrifice to get to the Drakehead." Lu Feng tried his best to summarize and retell what he saw and heard "When I last met them they were busy shouting at the other Lu's, making sure they would keep the secret."

'As long as the returned prime Warriors are not there to help, I should be able to make an impact one way or another.' thought Ye Wei. His eyes brightened up. "However, the returned prime elders will come when I kill more of their ten-star condensed prime Warriors."

'So he is serious about it!? Are we going to have to fight the elders?' Lu Feng's face turned ashen. He did not think that far.

Lu Feng's concern was written all over his face, realizing his partner's intentions. They both became silent.

'He didn't want my help. He summoned me here to talk about how we should clean up after he ambushed the Lu's forces on his own!'

The Lu's condensed prime Warrior reinforcements were now close to the Drakehead. If left alive, they would be at the Drakehead in merely ten days; if killed, the the elders stationed at Green Moon City might intervene.

Ye Wei and Lu Feng's operation was in a dilemma.

"I have one way to mess with the Lu's. We would be announce the Drakehead's location, and let the other martial families fight for it." Lu Feng proposed. His lips became pale, and his frown grew deeper. "We will crush the Lu's at their weakest!"

"I will not allow that! I swear; it will do us no good! I am not going to risk losing control over the Drakehead. It's my family's land, my ancestor's treasure!" Ye Wei's gaze intensified. "Green Moon City would

become a mess. Would you like to see your home become a war zone?”

“Pfft! Do you think your plan is better than mine?” Lu Feng grunted. He was more interested in revenge than anything else, to sabotage than to be constructive.

“Any plan is better than your plan!” Ye Wei stared at Lu Feng. He was surprised by how someone could be so affected by rage and revenge even to this extent. “We are only alive because we are in control of this place. If they took over, we won’t stand a chance to fight them by force.”

“As I suggested: I will assassinate as much of them as I can, I will then buy us time and we shall improvise from there. Be patient Lu Feng!” Ye Wei replied. He believed the underwater palace held the key to him evolving his Supernova stance.

When Ye Wei managed to evolve the Supernova stance, he would have the power to fight a returned prime Warrior. Once he then acquired gadgets and tricks from the Runemaster Union and the Glacial Temple, he would even be able to stand his ground while fighting against the best cultivators in the Lu family regardless of age.

Ye Wei realized there were more important matters to focus on. Thus he decided not to tell Lu Feng about the underwater palace he discovered.

“I guess that is for the best.” Lu Feng reluctantly admitted. He realized Ye Wei’s decision was more sensible one. He decided to trust his calm and collected partner, to protect their secret.

The sun set in the west sea, and darkness descended. Thick clouds covered the silvery moon, and Ye Wei stood up, freshened by the cool evening breeze.

“Let’s move!” After covering his face with a black disguise. His ghostly figure departed; he headed straight towards where the Lu’s men set camp.

“I hope it will all go according to plan!” Lu Feng ground his teeth and followed. He kept a distance, trying to remember all the little things he was told to do.

Silence pervaded the woods. The only noise that could be heard was the dried leaves dancing in the dusk's breeze. The duo went past a few beast nests in the windy night. They eventually arrived at a flat site filled with tents.

The Lu's base looked intimidating lit by the wiggling fire.

The fact that the Lu's reinforcement set up campfires either meant they were amateurs, or they were not afraid of the beasts and other cultivators knowing their location. All of them who stayed up guarding the camps had incredible Qi presence. Both Ye Wei and Lu Feng could feel the guards were at least condensed prime Warriors.

Ye Wei was standing on a bushy tree branch, surveilled the men dressed in white robes from afar. He could tell they were his target from the golden family crest on embroidered in front of their chests.

He could tell from the Qi disturbance that all three of them were condensed prime Warriors, and their leaders were resting within the camps.

The infiltration was done slowly and cautiously. Ye Wei had to wait for the perfect moment to strike. He wanted to make sure these condensed prime guards took their last breath before they could send their superiors a distress signal.

The gusts of winds grew stronger as the night got darker; the clouds dispersed, and the moonlight showered onto the woods. The wild beasts were becoming more active, but they avoided tents as they could smell and feel danger where the campfires were.

Next to the swishing trees, the three guards jealously looked at a shaking tent.

"These Du women are extremely energetic! Lu Li is going to be drained after this!" One of them licked his lips, commentating vulgarly.

"You can't blame him. He is still young, so he can't really say no to this kind of temptation. It's good for him that he gets a night off, hahaha!"

"Good for him? Maybe, but how are any of us going to sleep if they are

going to be this noisy the whole evening?”

“Ah, it’s nice to be young!” All three of them took a sip of wine and laughed while they excitedly talked about women.

As they were all keeping quiet, distracted by what was happening inside the tent, Ye Wei rushed out of the side bush, three Qi Swords flew out as he approached the trio.

“Plop! Plop! Plop!”

The Peerless Swords instantly slit all three condensed Warriors’ throats; their white robes were dyed a deep, yet fresh red.

Their consciousness faded before they knew what took their lives, and their eyes became dull and dim. Ye Wei quickly channeled his QI to hold them before they hit the ground. Their bodies softened, and he gently placed the dead on ground. He made them look as if they were falling asleep.

The campfire continued to flicker in the night breeze.

Having been through numerous life-threatening battles, Ye Wei was less and less emotional than he once was. The compassion in him had turned to a compromised heartlessness.

‘These guys guarded him while he is doing that !? He has got to be someone important in the Lu family.’ Ye Wei speculated.

‘He must have trained nonstop at the Drakehead,’ Lu Feng stated. He was shocked to see Ye Wei’s decisive and lethal moves, ‘and what stance was that? It took him less than a second to put them to sleep.’

‘This monster, I can’t believe he got this much stronger just in a few days!’ Lu Feng tried to compare Ye Wei with the other young cultivators, but he couldn’t think of anyone comparable.

‘Even the strongest youngster of this generation of the Lu’s, Lu Fan, would be no match for Ye Wei.’ Lu Feng had always looked up to his young cousin and used him as a reference point to know what he could improve on in terms of cultivation. “I had been blind. I should have

realized I only saw a small fraction of Ye Wei's talent when I was in Ning City."

Ye Wei silently sneaked closer to the tent i after he gently laid the dead bodies next to the campfire.

'How can he not notice I am here?' Ye Wei chuckled as he heard the man's pant and the woman's moan. 'This man is a ten-star condensed prime Warrior but a sloppy cultivator. I guess that's what it's like to be born into a big family. You get all the pills you need and your senses become blunt.'

Ten minutes past. The man in the tent groaned and breathed deep and slow.

'This is it. He is not alert at all!' Ye Wei reached for a scroll from his sleeve and tore it to deploy a runic array. The sound of the man and the woman in the tent suddenly became silent.

At the same time as Ye Wei tore the scroll, his Qi sword struck towards Lu Li's neck.

Lu Li was startled, his pleasure evaporated, and was replaced by a sharp sense of pain.

Chapter 175 - Brutal

Although Lu Li was not the most alert cultivator, he was a powerful fighter. His ten-star condensed prime level body strength saved him. His tough skin and muscles allowed him enough time to defend himself. Identifying the source of the pain, he bent his body backwards to avoid decapitation.

"Who is it that dares to assault me!?" He grabbed his bag next to him and took out a scroll.

"Zoom!"

He tore the scroll without hesitation. A golden Qi armor appeared on top of his whole body. The scroll lost its green glow as the stance was activated. 'High-level Myst stance, Golden Light Chainmail!'

"Clang! Clang! Clang!"

Ye Wei did not wait nor did he stop. As Lu Li was injecting his Qi into the armor to strengthen it, Ye Wei kept striking. The Qi Swords mercilessly rained onto Lu Li's armor, denting and chipping it.

"Crack!"

The dents became fissures and the Golden Light Chainmail stance disintegrated. Ye Wei's strikes then landed on Lu Li's left shoulder. He was bleeding out like a fountain while the residue energy from the swords and the armor hit the half naked woman striking her unconscious.

Ye Wei frowned. He quickly approached his mark. 'He reacted so quickly. Have I underestimated him!?'

"Who are you!? And how dare you make me bleed? I am a Lu elder's grandson!" Lu Li panicked. He screamed as he took another scroll out from his bag.

He never thought he would be ambushed with so many guards protecting his camp. If the Qi swords were just a split second quicker, they would have pierced through his neck.

Lu Li held tight onto the two scrolls. He took a step back and channeled his Qi to strengthen his body, “Who are you!?” He stared at his assassin who was dressed in a black disguise. All the while, Lu Li looked for a way to escape. He knew a sound barrier had been made around the tent. Thus, he shouts for help would not be heard; therefore, he desperately strove to escape.

“So you are the direct successor of the Lu’s bloodline?!” said Ye Wei coldly, looking calmly at the topless young man.

“What do you want? If you keep me alive, I will reward you! I will even tell you a secret, do you know what a Drakehead is?” Lu Li trode backwards as Ye Wei approached. His hands were shaking, but his grip was tight. He was ready to tear the scroll if Ye Wei got any closer.

“What about a Drakehead?” Ye Wei was startled but immediately realized he just heard a bluff, ‘if he knows where the Drakehead is, then the Lu’s wouldn’t be here!’

A second was all Lu Li needed. He smiled mischievously as he tore the scroll in his hand.

“Hmpft!” Ye Wei grunted and sent forth his Qi swords. His reflexes were superior to Lu Li’s. His Qi sword nicked Lu Li’s fingers and penetrated his palm.

“You sneaky man!” Ye Wei grunted and created five more Qi swords on each of fingers. With a palm strike, he directed the sharp spectral blades towards Lu Li’s chest.

Lu Li flinched and dropped the mystic scrolls on the floor. Nevertheless, he managed to inject Qi into a dark green ring he was wearing. Numerous layers of green energy shield appeared between him and Ye Wei.

“Boom!”

Ye Wei's powerful strike toppled the tent but failed to penetrate the defensive forbidden Myst stance.

'Cyan Lightshield! Lu Li has mystic arms!' Ye Wei felt sloppy that he didn't notice the green glow on his mark's finger.

"Naive, do you really think that can save you?" The green shield began to crack under Ye Wei's continuous strikes.

Lu Li chuckled. He broke the tent and the runic sound barrier while Ye Wei was busy dealing with the green shield.

"Kid, nobody can save you now! You will learn what a mistake it is to mess with a Lu!"

The campsite suddenly became chaotic.

"What is happening here!?"

"Intruder! We have an intruder!" The cultivators woke up to the sound of explosion.

'Damn it. This is exactly what I didn't want to happen.' Ye Wei grumbled, finally shattering the green shield with the Peerless Sword Qi.

Lu Li roared. His muscles bulged up, and his skin gained a metallic glow. "Good luck escaping!" His bestial eyes were set right on Ye Wei's dark figure. With a heavy step, he lunged forward.

'Body stance!?' Ye Wei narrowed his eyes, and his lips curled into a cruel smile. "Well I didn't come here to mess with the Lu's, I came here to kill them."

"Bang!"

Five Qi swords cut through air and landed on Lu Li's bare chest with a whirling Qi trail.

Lu Li's bloodthirsty smile froze at the sound of impact. He quickly slid backwards as if he was hit by a sledgehammer. Two long trails appeared on the ground under his feet, but not a single mark was left on his body.

"Cough!" Lu Li placed his hand on his chest; his body twitched in

agony.

“Master Lu, are you okay?” A group of condensed prime Warriors landed around Lu Li. Seven of them were at ten-star level. After checking their leader, they all put their eyes on Ye Wei.

“I am fine, but this kid has a trick or two up his sleeves. Be careful and don’t let him get away! I want him captured and tortured!” Lu Li said ferociously as he deactivated his body strengthening stance. His wounds began to bleed quickly as he relaxed his body. Therefore, he took an injury controlling pill.

The seven ten-star condensed prime cultivators surrounded Ye Wei in no time. While the Warriors from Green Moon City’s martial families stood further behind. The locals were just there as a formality; none of them really wanted to risk themselves for the Lu’s.

“Whoever captures this kid will be rewarded with ten Myst scrolls and a three star mystic arm!” Lu Li scream loud enough for the whole camp to hear.

“The Warriors standing at the back can be ignored. Not only are they weak, I can sense that they don’t even plan to fight!’ Ye Wei’s eyes scanned across, ‘these seven though, are willing to fight me!’ he quickly made a long sequence of hand seals based off his decisive assessment. Numerous rune sequences bursted out and turned into eight Qi swords, flying straight to the enemy’s frontline.

“Careful!” Lu Li’s pupils dilated, haunted by his recent experience of Ye Wei’s technique. However it was too late. Although every one of the seven heard him, they had no idea how careful they should be.

“You should have listened to your leader.” Ye Wei said callously.

The condensed prime Warriors’ attacks surrounded Ye Wei from all directions. All of them used the same formula to strengthen their bodies; thus, the cultivators became small storms of energy.

“Swoosh! Swoosh!” Ye Wei identified the threat. He guided his Qi swords to the two cultivators at the front.

Both of them heard a popping sound and felt a hold in the layers of Qi spinning around their bodies.

“How can it be so sharp?” The two ten-star condensed prime Warriors’ faces turned pale, regretting their decisions to be in front.

Even though Ye Wei’s Peerless Swords was still not a mature stance, the fact that the technique was the foundation of a rare sky stance meant the Qi swords were as strange to the Lu’s men as they were powerful.

The Qi swords raged towards their target in less time it took an advanced cultivator to react. The two vanguards standing in the front could only watch and wait for their to end to come.

“Swoosh!” Ye Wei’s finger swiftly swiped to the left.

The Qi sword flew towards one of the two. It penetrated his chest and immediately burrowed through his heart, sending him backwards.

‘Root Prison.’ Ye We clenched his fist and rooted the other guard on the spot

This Lu was a little quicker to react, but not entirely. Lifting his arm up in hopes that it would save him, it was only to be cleanly sliced off.

The other five ten-star condensed prime Warriors cursed and shivered; each one of them was startled by the casualties.

“Damn it! I warned them! Useless rubbish!” Lu Li frustratedly shouted. He realized he would have to fight Ye Wei on his own. He took another pill to enhance his body and Qi and braced himself for this fatal fight.

Chapter 176 - Escape

After neutralizing the two vanguards, Ye Wei did not stop his attack. His hands danced in the air, creating thirty-six Qi swords. He flung them to the five condensed prime Warriors trying to surround him.

It seemed reckless to Lu Feng that Ye Wei was killing in cold blood, but he soon realized his partner's intention, 'the less people he had to control, the better.'

'High-level Myst stance, Rippling Armor!'

'High-level Myst stance, Gold Body Plate!'

'High-level Myst stance, Lilac Wisteria!'

The remaining five ten-star condensed prime Warriors did not want to leave anything to chance. They quickly lit up the night sky with a sea of bright runes. The sequences turned into defensive stances, and when the shields were activated the cultivators drew more runes that became attacking stances.

"Rumble!"

Ye Wei answered the Lu's wave of stances with his own. His fingers were whizzing and his Qi swords spread wide, crashing into the five ten-star condensed prime Warrior's strikes.

"Who sent this masked man? He is ridiculous!"

"He killed the ten-star condensed prime Warriors while gravely injuring another in a brief exchange. There are no more than three cultivators in Green Moon City who are capable of doing that to my knowledge!" The martial families' cultivators stepped back, leaving the Lu's on their own.

Although they were promised Myst scrolls and a mystic arm, they knew their limits. Ye Wei didn't want to hurt the cultivators from his home

town, but he didn't have to do more than what he already was doing. They were all stunned by Ye Wei's display and very reluctant to help the Lu's.

Ye Zhong was in the crowd as the Ye family's representative. He was just watching on the side, unwilling to risk his life for those Lu tyrants. "The assassin's figure... is a young one, very similar to the age of little Wei, but he is stronger, much stronger!" He pondered to himself. He couldn't help but compare the disguised person with his precious cousin.

Ye Zhong knew Ye Wei was strong. To him, his kid cousin was strong enough to fight even a ten-star condensed prime Warrior, but he was not strong enough to battle like this assassin.

Lu Feng was shocked. He watched everything from a mile away on a top of a tree. 'When Ye Wei fought Lu Zhong, he struggled. This moment, he was dealing with ten-star condensed prime Warriors at his own pace!'

After a few moments passed, Lu Li absorbed the pill's energy and was nourished by its healing effects. Now in better condition, he glared at Ye Wei with anger.

'One of them dead, and one of them gravely injured. There are only six ten-star condensed prime Warriors left who can fight including myself. How could he have done so much without getting hurt himself!? I will not be embarrassed like this!'

"Useless idiots! Stop standing there and watch! Kill him!"

"Someone has to die for what he has done here today! I will send him to the torture dungeons, but if he escapes all of you will be sent there instead!" Lu Li's face turned ashen. His veins bulged up, and he growled at the ten-star condensed prime Warriors who were suppose to protect him.

The ten-star condensed prime level cultivators shivered, and their eyes twitched when they heard about the torture dungeons. That's when they knew their master was undoubtedly furious.

They would rather die fighting than to spend a second in the torture

dungeons as a victim.

All five of them gained a second wind; they decided to use their best stances, scrolls and mystic arms to get the job done.

Within seconds after Lu Li's threat, a wall of stances swiftly and mercilessly came crashing towards Ye Wei.

All the Green Moon City's cultivators who were spectating became pale and weak on their knees while they felt the trembling earth and blinded by bursts the runic light in the sky.

Under the pressure of this many stances, any condensed prime Warrior, would be reduced to dust, even peak ten-star Warriors would be paralyzed by the immense pressure.

'Starblink Steps!' Intimidated by the different stances rushing towards him, Ye Wei's face darkened and his figure became nimble and unpredictable.

His stance used the force of the his opponents' fierce attacks to create openings at the weaker spots. This allowed him to escape the seemingly undodgeable wall of stances by paths and movements none of the spectators expected to see.

'Selenic Armor!'

'Selenic Levitation!'

Ye Wei's gaze intensified. He was determined not to let his guard down while facing more than ten Myst stance on his own. Some of the ten-star condensed prime Warriors were even using high-level Myst stances.

Although Starblink Steps were powerful, because it was a Spirit stance, it meant that Ye Wei could not just count on it to negate the other powerful Myst stances.

"Humph!" Ye Wei's face tensed, but his eyes were calm and cold. He exhaled slowly. His Selenic Levitation stance altered the gravity within a ten-meter radius around him, thus, slowing the wall of stances collapsing onto him.

‘Peerless Swords!’ While the incoming stances were held in the air and slowed down, Ye Wei flung thirty-six Qi swords towards his enemies.

“What!?” None of the Lu’s expected the assassin would be able to fight back in such a dire situation. They saw the Qi swords coming, but they could not predict the swords’ path.

Only two out of five managed to dodge the Qi blades with luck’s aid. The rest of the guards’ bodies were penetrated by Ye Wei’s attack. They died instantaneously and flew backwards.

Ye Wei did not reserve his Qi. He used all of his tricks in hopes that he could take control of the situation.

“I didn’t think I would have ever been humiliated like this!” Lu Li’s eyes became completely red, with his pulsating hand he took a scroll out of his bag.

“Ttts!”

‘You brought this upon yourself. Let’s see if you can slither out of this forbidden Myst stance!’ Lu Li looked at the scroll in his hand, his eyes twitching. He felt slightly uneasy having to use something costly. ‘This was my last forbidden high-level Myst scroll! I can’t believe I am forced to use what my grandpa left to me. All those years I have never used and now to use it on a situation like this!’

‘Ivy Prison!’ Lu Li ground his teeth. Numerous sequences of dark, glowing runes bursted out of the scroll, tearing the scroll and making it dim.

The runes formed eighteen vines of runic ivies. They were thick like a giant python; they grew and flew towards Ye Wei.

The vines caught up with Ye Wei’s speed; they chased him down, intertwined and linked together, forming a circular prison around him despite his best efforts to escape.

Just moments later, Ye Wei was caged.

“Kill him!”

Lu Li's bloodthirsty smile grew wider as he saw the assassin being trapped.

"Bang! Bang!"

Lu Li spread his fingers and created a tiny opening on the ivy prison. The Lu's condensed prime Warriors followed their leader's lead and fired their best stances at Ye Wei.

Alongside the runic ivy, flames, Qi swords, spectral beasts formed in the sky. Tens of stances crushed against Ye Wei simultaneously.

"You've killed a lot of our men, and you made me waste two of my forbidden high-level Myst scrolls; however, I really want to get some information from you. Yet, I also want you to die!" Lu Li shouted.

The runic ivy cage was no wider than three meters, and it was the target of over thirty Lu's Warriors.

Even if Ye Wei grew wings on his back, there was no way he could escape the impending doom.

"It's a shame the assassin can't do more. I guess, thought, that is that is good. I don't want trouble. It will probably draw more Lu's to the city ultimately."

"What do you mean? Don't you want to fight? Don't you want our city back?" The cultivators from Green Moon City's martial families began to speculate

Inside the prison, Ye Wei created a spectral selenic beast while still under the effect of starblink steps. He tried both to break and escape the constriction but did not have any luck. He frowned. He focused on trying to break the prison while his selenic armor was still holding together.

"This is too tough; I just can't do it." Ye Wei could have probably broken the prison if he had more time, but he was under pressure from a number of stances that could soon take his life.

"Ye Wei! The Lu's returned prime Warrior is coming. Get out of there!" The runic badge vibrated. Lu Feng's panicking voice sounded in Ye Wei's

head.

‘Why is Lu Qianyin here!?’ Lu Feng recognized the approaching Lu elder, not by the blurred face, but by the speed enhancing stance he was using.

‘Returned prime!?’ Ye Wei gasped, horrified at the state of affairs. He did not plan to be trapped, and he certainly did not plan to fight a returned prime Warrior in such condition.

‘I need to get out of here!’

Ye Wei flicked his sleeve, and a dark scroll appeared in his palm.

At the price of three hundred thousand, the Instant Shadow Scrolls were not used by many. Upon activation, Ye Wei became a mist and escaped the prison through a vapor form.

‘I will be back to kill the rest of you!’ Ye Wei taunted as he briefly reappearing. He shot out thirty-six more Qi swords at some of the Lu’s weaker men. The cultivator did not have the power to defend themselves against Ye Wei’s swift strikes.

Ye Wei turned into a thin mist again. He reappeared a few hundred yards from the tents inside the woods. As the scroll’s effect fell off, he used the Starblink Steps again. He melted into North Hill Bay’s dense vegetation.

Chapter 177 - North Barren Mountains

“No!” As the Qi swords came closing in, the condensed prime Warriors could only watch. They were not quick enough to react nor were they able to do so due to the mass pressure waves Ye Wei’s attack imposed. There was no time for stances or scrolls, only their demise.

“Bang!”

When despair was the only feeling these condensed prime Warriors felt, seconds before their deaths, tens of golden bolts of Qi caught up with Ye Wei’s swords.

With great precision, the finger-shaped bolts struck each of the thirty-six swords right before the Lu’s men were killed.

The Lu’s looked in awe at the golden fireworks in front of them; their robes and hair were wet from sweating.

Most of them felt numb and stunned since they were about to die.

Lu Li on the other hand, was relieved. If more of his men were to die, he would have to be punished even if his grandfather was an elder. ‘Even if he can’t help, he would be able to the witness to prove how strong this assassin is in front of the council, I don’t think they would believe tonight’s attack otherwise.’

“Chase Him!” Lu Li ordered in a low voice as he leaped forth towards the direction Ye Wei escaped in.

The cultivators from different martial families were hesitant. After giving each other a look, they all decided to follow, but just slow enough so the distance between them and Lu Li kept lengthening.

‘Returned prime Warrior’s strength, he just casually crushed Ye Wei’s strikes from miles away!’ Lu Feng made an even greater effort to hide his Qi presence; there was an undisguised sense of fear and shock in his

eyes.

Being a cultivator himself, he knew how impressive the returned prime Warrior's finger strike was.

A cold glint flashed in Lu Feng's eyes. His figure shook and he disappeared into the shadow projected by moonlight onto the ancient branches.

'You will need more speed if you want to chase me down!' Ye Wei thought to himself as he channeled his Qi and transformed it into runes under his feet. With the Starblink Steps, he became lighter on his feet, pulled ahead of the Lu's chasing him.

Knowing that the returned prime level elder was going to catch up, Ye Wei leaped into the dense bushes and sped up while keeping completely quiet, 'if you want to catch me, you will have to find me first.'

As Ye Wei stood on the land registry, North Hill Bay only covered sixty square miles, but the mountain range that began inside the area stretched a thousand miles northward, giving Ye Wei a labyrinth of trees and rocks for cover.

However, even it was within Ye Wei's plan to utilize the mountain to shake the Lu's. He, like a lot of returned prime Warriors, did not wish to enter too deeply into the North Barren Mountains, which was the home of numerous wild beasts and demon hordes

Four miles away from Ye Wei, a white-robed, chubby older man was accelerating. His fire red hair fluttered in the wind.

His belly wobbled as he sped through the woods. His movements were slow, but his legs were strong, and each of his steps produced a thousand feet distance between them.

Within five breaths' time, the red haired elder, Lu Qianying, had already covered miles. He watched over Lu Li and the rest from above. His presence filled the woods.

His red hair illuminated the dark. It was bright as daylight radiating three hundred feet around him. His Qi presence was affecting people's

consciousness on a primal level.

‘That is someone special!’

The Lu’s and martial family cultivators following were startled. They could not help but admire and worship the old chubby man running above the clouds.

“Elder Qianying!” The Lu’s landed and went down on their knees.

“Elder Qianying!” Lu Li quickly stopped and bowed with the utmost respect. Being the head elder’s grandson meant that he did not have to get on his knees. Nevertheless, he was not going to waste his time on etiquette when he was busy chasing the assassin.

“I didn’t think someone would dare interfere with our search!” Lu Qianying’s comedic face darkened. His cold eyes scanned the dense woods below him, trying to spot any abnormalities.

“Any idea who it was?” Lu Qianying’s penetrating gaze was set onto Lu Li.

“Sir, I am not sure; he was masked, and a lot stronger than I am. He has some mysterious tricks up his sleeves!” There was no chance that Lu Li would tell the elder he was ambushed when he was in the company of a woman.

“All the ten-star condensed prime Warriors and the locals we recruited fought him at the same time, but it didn’t seem to be enough. Out of Green Moon City, I think only the City Lord, Principal Gu and Master Yi are capable of doing what the assassin did. However judging by height, the attacker should be a teenager. Therefore, I assume whoever we are chasing, is not from around the area.”

“Not someone from Green Moon City?” Lu Qianying frowned. He wondered if his nightmare had become reality, ‘had other families found out about the Drakehead?’ The Lu’s were powerful in Qing state, but in a grander scale, they were not considered as influential.

The reason why the Lu’s sent two returned prime Warriors to Green Moon City was primarily to contain the information about the Drakehead

from spreading.

“Stop all other operations! Lock down the North Hill Bay area. Pause the search before this is settled.” Lu Qianying said with determination, “now, get up and keep chasing you fools!”

The chubby elder narrowed his eyes and glared towards the mountains, ‘this highland is known to be the nest of wild beasts and demons. If this reckless assassin decided to run, it would be towards the bay area, not the mountains!’

Lu Qianying headed in the direction where Ye Wei disappeared into. He spread his will-force and used it as a detection tool, ‘I am too old to play hide and seek, but I will make an exception for you!’

Ye Wei’s Qi was hidden in his bones at rest; therefore, he was able to hide his presence. If he was not a Supernova stance user, his neck would have been snapped by Lu Qianying already.

As the elder ordered, Lu Li and the five ten-star condensed prime Warriors each took seven weaker cultivators with them to search the bay area thoroughly.

If the search teams saw anything, they were ordered to immediately fire their flare scrolls to notify Lu Qianying. The bay area was vast, but for a returned prime Warrior from one end to the other was just fifty steps reach.

Shrouded by darkness, Ye Wei slowed down and covered his tracks entirely. He lifted his head and looked towards the Drakehead that was twenty miles away from where he was, making his choices of escape path very limited.

The Lu’s elder was on his way, and there was not a chance he would let Ye Wei live.

At the hour of dawn, the slumbering trees were woken up by morning breeze. When the gust died down, the bay area returned to silence.

A nimble figure sneaked out of the dense branched. The disturbed birds flapped their wings and flew off.

It was Ye Wei.

‘These people are persistent!’ Ye Wei turned to look behind him, confirming the Lu’s men were still looking for him. They were chasing after him like packs of dogs tailing a fox.

Ye Wei had already took the Lu’s on a tour around the bay area, but he still could not shake them. To make things worse, he could sense the returned prime Warrior was closing in on him.

‘This is the bay area’s edge, if I go any further I will be in the North Barren Mountains.’ Ye Wei looked at the high rise hesitantly and frowned. ‘This is basically an enormous beast nest. There are rare and even emperor grade beasts roaming these mountains.’

“Stop running and I will consider let you die a less painful death!” Lu Qianying’s voice rumbled the woods.

“Swoosh! Swoosh!”

A few Qi bolts flew right at Ye Wei as the loud, threatening words acted as a diversion.

“Fu*k, he knows where I am!?” Ye Wei could hardly hear the wind breaking sound, but he sensed the elder’s strike. He grunted and used the Peerless Swords to defend himself.

“Bang!”

The Qi swords crashed onto the finger-shaped bolts; both stances disintegrated in a burst of light and a shrill sound.

The chubby elder’s will-force picked up Ye Wei’s Qi sword.

“You can’t hide!” Lu Qianying was more or less sure about Ye Wei’s location. His figure turned into a flash towards where the shatters runes were.

“Fatty, follow me into the mountains if you dare!” Ye Wei taunted as he rushed away from the Drakehead.

‘He will be able to catch me in a few seconds if I slow down even though I am a few miles ahead.’ Ye Wei channeled his Qi down to his feet. With Starblink Steps, his movements were light and nimble; he used the wind and the branches’ bounce to speed himself up.

There was no way back, Ye Wei ground his teeth and leaped past the stone tablet that marked the edge of North Hill Bay area.

Chapter 178 - Pack

Even though Ye Wei spent all of his energy trying to run from his pursuer, the distance between him and the returned prime Warrior elder was not getting any farther but, on the contrary, closer.

If the situation persisted, it would only be a matter of time when Ye Wei would be caught.

He sensed the returned prime Warrior's killing intent. The terrifying presence kept closing in from behind. Therefore, he took out the only remaining Instant Shadow Scroll he had.

‘When the cubby elder will catch up, the only way out will be to use this scroll. I will have to stay in shadow form for as long as I can. I should aim for at least another hundred miles.’

At one point five million contribution tokens each, Instance Shadow Scrolls were considered treasures. Ye Wei was aware of its value, refusing to use it before the last possible moment.

He was confident that the Mystic Mount presence in his Sentient would be able to sense danger. Thus, if the Lu elder ever decided to lead his men into the North Barren Mountains, he could utilize it to lead his pursuers to wild beasts and demons “Damn it, this kid is reckless!” The chubby one-star returned prime Warrior could vaguely feel Ye Wei's energy entering the barren mountains, his face became dark as a starless night.

The North Barren Mountains was the home to a variety of plants and animals; the abundant environment made it the perfect place for dangerous wild beasts to live.

The high grade wild beasts that resided at the mountains made Lu Qianying hesitant about entering. The more self-absorbed one is,, the more they treasure their own life. He was not sure if Ye Wei was stupid or

brave.

“Elder Qianying, what should we do now?” Lu Li and the other Lu’s men all looked at the chubby returned prime Warrior, waiting for the next order.

All of the chasers lost their enthusiasm and anger as they realized the assassin had entered the North Barren Mountains.

“We will continue to chase him!” Lu Qianying gritted his teeth and said. His gaze became cold as he placed his eyes onto the seemingly endless mountain range.

“Are you sure...?” Lu Li and the rest looked at the towering mountains. They were incapable of imagining a positive outcome if they entered the danger zone.

“What are you cowards so scared of? There are beast nests in these mountains and I am sure that kid knows it too.” Lu Qianying stared at the scared men. He shouted. “Even I will struggle to stay safe deeper in the mountains, do you really think the kid will dare go to were I can’t reach?”

“Nobody can know why we are here. Even I might get into trouble with the council if this doesn’t work out I will be treading on thin ice!” Lu Qianying clenched his fist.

Lu Li and the others stopped complaining and reluctantly followed the superior's orders.

“Get moving! That kid is very good at hiding his Qi presence. I am using a detection stance now, but I think I will not be able to sense him very soon!” Lu Qianying became tense. He had been chasing for the whole evening without any luck. He was no longer underestimating Ye Wei as he struggled to keep up throughout the whole evening.

“Yes!”

Lu Li and the other condensed prime Warriors knew the importance of keeping the operation a secret. They knew keeping it a secret was also one of their top priorities.

“Swoosh! Swoosh!” Motivated by the elder’s words, they channeled their entire strength and followed the chubby figure into the mountains at top speed.

Lead by Lu Qianying’s sharp sensing stance, the search team was able to pick up on the weak trace left by Ye Wei, maneuvering in his direction.

‘How did they manage to follow me? Are they actually daring to wander into the mountains?’ Ye Wei frowned and thought to himself.

Lu Qianying’s stance was able to pick up Ye Wei’s location, but Ye Wei’s soul sensitivity was superior to the Lu elder’s detection. He was able to determine the search team’s location from a further distance.

Lu Qianying could only vaguely pick up Ye Wei’s location while Ye Wei’s sensed all the living creatures that were giving off even the smallest life energy.

On the edges of the North Barren Mountain, Ye Wei’s figure flashed between trees and rock, looking for paw prints and tracking marks.

Beast nests were a rarer sight on the mountain range’s outskirts. Ye Wei had been able to sense a few beasts while he was running, but it would have taken more than a few beasts to strand a returned prime Warrior supported by a large group of condensed prime Warriors.

Ye Wei was looking for a large pack of wild beasts that could potentially occupy or even eliminate his chasers.

‘It’s harder than I thought it would be. People make the North Barren Mountains sound a lot more dangerous than they really are.’ Ye Wei thought to himself while nimbly navigating the range at an extraordinary speed.

‘They are half a mile closer!’ Ye Wei’s brows furrowed, remembered how the chubby elder’s finger strikes were strong enough to be life threatening from miles away.

Knowing the elder’s extraordinary close range pressured Ye Wei. He, out of sheer nervousness, actually sacrificed a bit of his speed to keep track of the distance between him and the elder’s lethal finger strikes.

‘There is only around four miles between me and them. I have to find a pack of beasts soon or I will have to run deeper into the mountain range where then I would have to avoid getting surrounded by packs!’ Ye Wei looked towards the high rise and the valleys and lead to the hills. He shook his head, shivering.

‘Where are you when I need you!?’ Ye Wei stomped heavily on a giant rock, propelling him and accelerating his speed.

The corroding rock split in half and cracked into rubble within seconds.

‘Ha, desperate kid!’ Lu Xianying landed. He looked at the rubble thirty seconds after Ye Wei broke the rock. His cruel smile grew larger.

‘Speed up! We are getting closer!’ Lu Qianying swiped his arm and ordered his men to run towards where Ye Wei went.

‘Swoosh! Swoosh!’

Ye Wei knew his life depends on how quick he ran; while Lu Qianying felt his family’s uprising could be sabotaged by whatever power order the lone assassin to attack the Lu’s camp.

The distance between the two parties kept becoming closer. When the sun had faintly bleached the clouds light pink, the distance between Ye Wei and Lu Qianying shortened to less than two miles. The distance a returned prime Warrior could cover in less than ten seconds.

‘One and a half mile, I am so close my speed enhancing stance could bring me right to you.’ A cold glint appeared in Lu Qianying’s eyes as he chuckled and thought.

‘Eh?’ Ye Wei could sense the Lu’s closing in. The hair on his back stood up as he felt threatened by the returned prime Warrior’s fearsome presence.

Ye Wei would much rather head deeper into the mountains than confront the Lu elder.

Another hour passed, the sun was entirely above the skyline. It lit up the long and winding mountain ridge.

Sunlight flashed through the branches of the trees. Ye Wei was camouflaged by the variegated shadows. He just crossed over a valley, entering the highland and the dense woods.

“A wild beast pack!” As Ye Wei entered the dense forest, his Sentient shook. He smiled as he picked up their fierce presence.

‘Hahaha, finally!’ Ye Wei thought to himself, ‘enjoy your meal!’ The mystic mount presence sensed the exact location of the wild blood wolves. He was ready to lead the Lu’s right into the beasts’ jaws.

“Three high-grade general bloodwolves, twelve mid-grade, forty low-grade.” Ye Wei mumbled to himself as he counted. His enchanted will-force diffused from him and filled the valley. This gave him a detailed mind image of the location and even the thick hair of the beasts.

“Kid, today’s date will be on your headstone!” Lu Qianying growled. He was now exactly one and a half miles away from Ye Wei.

‘High-level Myst stance, Slideflash!’ Lu Qianying smiled as a yellow-glowing rune sequence appeared under his feet.

“Swoosh!”

Lu Qianying’s figure became blurry. He accelerated to the speed of a two-star condensed prime Warrior.

In a blink of an eye, a chubby, red-haired old man appeared in front of Ye Wei. “You can’t run now!” Lu Qianying’s fingers curled into a claw shape, aimed right at Ye Wei’s head.

“Rumble!”

A surge of primal energy rushed from Lu Qianying’s dantian to his hand. A burst of runes appeared in the air and transformed into a twenty feet long and wide spectral palm. It flew straight to Ye Wei’s skull.

“Oh, hello!” Ye Wei stared above as the giant palm fell onto him. His lips curled up as he swiped his hand to the side, shooting a rain of Qi swords from his palm towards the valley.

Concurrently, a tearing sound came out of Ye Wei’s left hand. A faint

green hue wrapped around his body instantaneously.

“Phewm!”

Ye Wei’s figure faded. He turned into thin gray smoke and was carried by a strong gust of wind. he pulled a whole mile ahead of Lu Qianying, going into the valley.

There was no pause in Ye Wei actions. It was apparent to the chubby elder that his target had calculated being caught.

Chapter 179 - Split

Ye Wei, the inheritor of the Glacial Emperor's legacy, had an almost unlimited supply of weaponry. What others deemed rare and precious he cared little for.

Unless they contained earth stances, there were not a lot of scrolls that interested him, except, of course, rare scrolls that had functions other than standard offensive or defensive stances.

"You little prick!" Lu Qianying had chased Ye Wei for the entire evening. He could even feel the fabric on Ye Wei's face mask. He felt outraged, his target had so casually slipped away.

Lu Qianying glanced at the valley and grunted heavily. He decided to enter with slight hesitation in his eyes and hindrance in his movements.

Lu Li and the rest of the Lu's men entered the valley following the elder's lead.

"Bang!"

Just as Lu Qianying and his men entered the valley, the Qi swords fired by Ye Wei had entered a cave at the bottom of the valley. These golden energy blades crashed onto the cave's sides and exploded.

'Howl! Howl!'

The explosion shook the cave. When the explosion quieted, there emerged a few hundred pairs of eyes; they opened simultaneously, furious and bloodthirsty.

"Roar!"

Inside the dark cave, the pack of wolves' eyes resembled hundreds of fierce yellow lights. Their eyes glowing like the moon in the dark morning air.

"Rumble! Rumble! Rumble!"

At the exact moment Lu Xianying, Lu Li and the other ten-star condensed prime level pursuers entered the valley, a few hundred blood wolves rushed out of the cave. The sound was like a stampede of nearly a thousand paws stomping heavily. All the trees shook, and the stones on the ground loosened and rumbled.

“Shit! Blood wolves, a large pack of them!” the Lu’s heard the deafening howl. They were terrified to see the glowing red-yellow eyes between the branches.

“Sweet Sages, there are hundreds of them!”

The Warriors’ legs shook and their guts churned; intimidated by the blood wolves’ sinister reputation, they were told since they were young that these wolves would kill you or die trying.

“You little bastard! I will cut you into little pieces whenever I find you!” Lu Qianying’s face paled. His veins bulged up and his bloodshot eyes were as red as a beet. He looked in Ye Wei’s direction imagining he was killing right then.

Being tricked by a kid was more than just humiliating for a returned prime Warrior, it was shameful. Furthermore, Lu Qianying was struggling to stay calm after a restless night.

Lu Qianying’s sensing stance was blocked by the thick rocks while Ye Wei’s will-force went into the caves and detected the wolves before any of the Lu’s did.

Lu Qianying was raging. He felt like a seasoned hunter being humiliated by its prey. He stopped and stood still. His golden Qi rushed out of his dantian, the pressure of the energy burst dug a three hundred feet wide and three feet deep pit; the fissure on the ground spread across half of the valley.

‘High-level Myst stance, Golden Mountain Seal!’ Lu Qianying’s bloodshot eyes spotted Ye Wei, who was hiding next to a cliff.

He ignored the charging wolves and did not bother to protect Lu Li and the other Warriors. He swiped his hand forth and made a few rune

sequences.

The chubby elder was more than ready to lose a few of his men if that ensured Ye Wei's death. For him, it was more important to keep the secret about the Drakehead safe than a few lives. It was for the greater good.

The burst of golden runic light condensed in the sky. It formed a sixty foot tall pyramid shape. The sheer mass of the runes gave it a force of attraction as well as an immense pressure.

The pyramid crushed and compressed the air, a rumbling sound echoed throughout the valley while tens of blood wolves were smashed and pressed into a meat paste.

“Awoo!”

“Awoo!”

The three high-grade blood wolf leaders saw the violent death of their allies. With their superior and almost human-like intellect, they identified the murderer to be Lu Qianying. The leaders of the pack howled furiously. The runes on their bones began to flow; they sought revenge.

The seven mid-grade blood wolves followed their leaders. Their bloodthirsty eyes were set on the enormous pyramid.

The stronger ones of the pack accelerated and turned into trails of blood in the sky.

The wolves jumped. Their bodies flashed beside Ye Wei, but his Qi-less presence was not their target. Their revenge filled noses pointed at Lu Quianying.

“Awoo!”

Hundreds of wolves howled. Their heads pointed up towards the sky, mourning but also cursing. They were angered by the human intruders and their violent murderous act.

“Boom! Boom! Boom!”

The trails of red proceeded in astonishing speed, crushing into the runic pyramid.

The pyramid's fearsome force knocked the mid-grade blood wolves back. They fell on the ground and were paralyzed by the jagged rocks. The three pack leaders were bleeding out from their mouths.

The wolf pack leaders were a bit stronger than the ten-star condensed prime Warriors. However, the forbidden high-level Myst stance used by a returned prime Warrior was not something they could defeat or defend themselves from.

The pack did not stop the pyramid from falling, but its path had been altered.

“Rumble!”

The pyramid flew right next to Ye Wei. It shadowed his face before landing on the rocky cliff. The pyramid's raging energy exploded, and the cliff collapsed. All hundred feet of the cliff slid down, the east side of the valley was now flattened.

“Is this the power of returned prime Warrior with only a flick of his finger!?” Ye Wei's pupils dilated. His back was soaked with sweat. All the hair on his arm and legs stood up from his goosebumps. ‘The returned prime Warrior's power was unnatural!’

Recently, Ye Wei began to be more confident with his cultivation level, but he now realized how vulnerable he truly was. He saw the wrath of the returned prime Warrior with his own eyes. He was not sure if he had enough time to avoid the pyramid strike even with the aid of scrolls. He needed to escape quickly as possible.

“Lu's you can have fun with the blood wolves, I am out of here!” Ye Wei inhaled long and deep. After calming down, he stomped the floor, leaving a trail of star-like runes behind him as he escaped to the outskirts of the mountains.

After witnessing the power of the chubby elder, Ye Wei just wanted to be as far away from the fatal danger.

“You brat! Where do you think you are going? You’re staying here with us!” Lu Qianying could see Ye Wei was trying to get away. He grunted and tried to leap towards the disguised kid’s direction. However just as he was going to leap forth, he found himself surrounded by hundreds of wolves.

The fanged beasts were violent and reckless. Although they could not threaten Lu Qianying’s life, they were capable of immobilizing him momentarily. When he managed to free himself, Ye Wei was out of his sight entirely.

Furious and crazed, Lu Qianying once again activated his sensing stance. Nevertheless, this time, it was all too late. He could not sense the tiny amount of energy the mysterious assassin gave off.

“This kid wouldn’t dare enter the mountain range. He has to be hiding somewhere in the outskirt area. Now, go and search for him!” Lu Qianying’s face was completely red, “I want the ten-star condensed prime Warriors to lead a team of five each. Cover every inch of ground back towards the bay area. Bring me that kid dead or alive!”

“And if you don’t bring me that kid, consider yourselves exiled!” he irately shouted. His red hair fluttered in the breeze as he forcefully tried to scan around.

“Yes sir!” Each and every one of the Lu’s bent down, bowing to Lu Qianying’s supremacy.

Though the teams were all condensed prime Warriors, they did not feel entirely safe being in the area. They just had a near death experience involving the large pack of blood wolves. They would rather leave and remain alive.

“Come, take a jade amulet, each of you. If you see that kid or feel like you are in danger, break it. The kid we are chasing is armed with many rare scrolls. I fear he has more tricks up his sleeves.” Lu Qianying spoke as he handed each of the team leaders a forbidden high-level Myst scroll.

“I don’t care if you have to sacrifice your lives, or even your teammates’. Just stay alive long enough to keep the kid there for twenty seconds, and

I will be there. The amulet will help me locate you.”

“Yes sir!” shouted Lu Li. This morning the head elder’s grandchild had acted his most subservient he had ever done in his entire life or would ever.

Chapter 180 - Thundercrack Stamp

Lu Li, Lu Hai and the other four ten-star condensed prime Warriors each took five cultivators with them in their search for Ye Wei on the outskirts of North Barren Mountains.

All of them, even Lu Li were afraid of the consequence of failing their assignment, and they feared facing the powerful assassin as well. Lu Li just fiercely wanted to annihilate him.

Ye Wei flew through the woods as he expanded the range of his will-force's reach. He knew the returned prime Warrior's senses given by their will-force was potent enough to detect energy from more than ten miles away.

Five miles was the limit of Ye Wei's will-force reach. Any further Ye Wei could not sense if the object or person was farther from him. 'This is dangerous. They can set a trap if they know my location while I am oblivious on theirs!' Ye Wei gritted his teeth and continued to channel his will-force.

'Six miles...'

'Seven miles...' His veins bulged up, and his Sentient rattled as he reached his limit.

"No! This is still not enough!" He injected Qi into his Sentient and dug deep to the mystic mount within.

The golden presence of the mystic mount shone bright; Ye Wei could feel his will-force thickening.

'Ten miles... Twenty, thirty!'

Ye Wei could finally sense his pursuers. He felt the Lu's movements. Judging by what he could sense, none of the small teams, not even Lu Qianying himself, had any idea on Ye Wei's whereabouts.

‘The returned prime Warrior and the teams of condensed prime Warriors slowed down. I might even be able to sneak back to the Drakehead and train a bit more if I am careful!’

“They’ve just split up!” Ye Wei mumbled to himself as he sensed the slight change in Qi disturbance, ‘that’s a good sign. It means they don’t know where I am!’

Ye Wei’s eyes glistened Although coordinated, the Lu’s every single move was read by Ye Wei. He noticed they were split farther and farther from each other. ‘I’ve been chased for an entire night, I think it’s time to turn the tables.’

‘But how should I do it?’ He was still haunted by the scene of the valley collapsing because of just one strike from the returned prime Warrior.

“I can’t defend myself against a forbidden high-level Myst stance, not when it is used by a returned prime Warrior.” Ye Wei muttered.

‘Though it will be hard to find a chance like this, when the all the teams are closer to each other again.’ Ye Wei decided to launch a counter attack. ‘I have been feeling anxious the entire night. Now it’s my turn for you to feel anxious. I need to kill a couple of you to send a clear, direct message!’

Taking advantage of the Lu’s split search, Ye Wei quietly tracked down one of the weaker teams. He was ready to silence all of them. He hid all his Qi presence. While sensing where the returned prime Warriors were, he calculated the best time and place for the surprise attack.

On the other hand, Lu Qianying was clear that his men were no match for Ye Wei. He was trying his best to keep an equal distance between himself and each of the search teams.

The seasoned elder knew he was looking for a needle in a haystack, so he kept his distance. It was his intention all along to use the six teams as bait. He correctly assumed that it was in the assassin’s interest to eliminate as many Lu’s as possible.

However, he was one step behind since he had no knowledge about Ye

Wei's sensory capabilities.

‘One of the search teams is closing in, six of them in total, the strongest one of them is a ten-star condensed prime Warrior...’ Ye Wei was constantly assessing the situation. He waited patiently for his timing, though.

After hours of stalking, Ye Wei saw his window of opportunity. He took a scroll out of his bag and sped towards the team furthest away from Lu Qianying.

“Rip!”

The enchanted scroll was torn; sequences of runes bursted out from the tear. Ye Wei was suddenly wrapped in a green runic light. He rushed towards the isolated team with speed of a returned prime Warrior.

Both of them being forbidden high-level Myst stances, the Green Shade stance within the scroll was at least as quick as Lu Qianying's Slideflash stance.

Ye Wei took more than one of these scrolls from the Glacial Emperor. Although he preferred using them defensively, he believed using them offensively also would gain him tempo.

“Swoosh...”

Ye Wei became a cyan flash. He quietly advanced two miles distance. His gaze was hysterical, and he attentively looked forward to seeing his victims.

‘Lu Li?’ Ye Wei was close enough to identify the energy source, ‘a direct descendant of the Lu's bloodline! This was worth the hours of stalking!’

‘Goodbye!’ Ye Wei rushed forward, activated the second evolution of Supernova stance as he shot six Peerless Swords to his targets.

“Plop!”

“Clang!”

The Qi Swords hit simultaneously five condensed prime Warriors. Their bodies were penetrated from behind. None of them could even see their

killer's ice cold eyes before they died.

The dead bodies flew backwards from the Ye Wei's powerful sword's force. They were eventually stopped by the trees.

It did not come to a surprise for Ye Wei that he was able to kill five condensed prime Warrior from the dark, but the man left standing did startle him.

"It's you!" Lu Li saw his dead teammates. He turned around and recognized the familiar figure. "How dare you! This time I am ready for your cowardly ambush! You won't be able to run this time!"

Lu Li quickly leaped away from Ye Wei; he crushed the jade amulet with his large muscular hands. He was still injured; consequently, he concluded before he started the search that he would not fight, but instead just buy time until Lu Qianying arrived to finish the assassin off.

"Ha, and you call me a coward?" Ye Wei immediately guessed the Lu Li's intention. He narrowed his eyes and shot ten more Qi swords right at Lu Li's chest.

"Gotcha!" Lu Qianying felt the burst of energy released by the broken amulet from forty miles away.

"Swoosh!"

Lu Qianying levitated, and he flew towards Lu Li's current location at a fearsome speed.

"Same trick? How naive!" Lu Li chuckled. He clenched his fist and channeled his Qi to strengthen his body further. His muscles bulged up, and his skin gained a mysterious metallic shine.

"Titanic form is the most defensive out of the Lu's three earth grade cultivation formulas!" Lu Li's disdainful smile grew wide. His fist flew towards Ye Wei.

"Clang! Clang Clang!"

After a deafening sharp noise, the Qi swords dispersed. Lu Li was unharmed except a few shallow scratches on his fist.

“Eh!?” Both Lu Li and Ye Wei were surprised. They both underestimated their opponent.

“Pfft!” Lu Li’s face darkened. He grunted and stomped the ground; his Qi swept the ground, sending a shockwave straight at Ye Wei.

‘He is stronger than me, but I don’t need to beat him. I just need to buy time until the elder comes!’ Lu Li was bold but not completely dumb. He knew what to expect.

‘Starblink Steps!’

Ye Wei frowned. He quickly channeled his Qi to his feet; the star-like rune sequences under his feet buffered the shockwave while he was charging towards Lu Li.

“Swoosh!”

Lu Li was struggling to follow Ye Wei’s ghostly figure. He threw his fist forth repeatedly to create a safe zone in front of him. However, before his eyes registered where his opponent was he felt a cold breeze behind his head.

Ye Wei aimed right at the back of Lu Li’s skull. His fist was infused with Peerless Sword energy and traveled at the speed of lightning.

“Clang!”

The sound of an iron hammer striking a rock sounded when Ye Wei’s fist crushed against Lu Li’s head. “What a tough body! I don’t think I have enough time to destroy him before the return prime Warrior comes!”

Ye Wei stared at Lu Li, counting the time in his heart, ‘I’ve landed all my Qi swords onto the back of his head, at the human body’s weak spot, I don’t understand.’ He didn’t even hurt Lu Li, and Lu Li’s strikes didn’t hit Ye Wei even once. It seemed they were at a stand still.

“You are still not strong enough to hurt me! Just surrender now before I tear you apart!” Lu Li screamed and laughed. His heavy fists fell onto Ye Wei like a rain of meteors.

“Bang!”

Ye Wei’s Qi Swords and Lu Li’s metallic fist clashed against each other. The impact turned stones into dust and sent a rippling energy wave through the woods, snapping the tree trunks in its path.

The enormous recoil stunned Ye Wei slightly. He absorbed the main impact with a backflip while the star-like runes under his feet kept his body steady.

“Earth grade formula, huh?” Ye Wei shook off the numbing tingle in his shoulder. He noticed the similarities between Lu Li’s technique and the Polaris Academy’s formula.

‘His formula can redirect impact too! It’s a shame the falling star form is unfinished. I am sure the Ye Supreme had worked on it, and I can feel its potential.’ Ye Wei again tried to learn his

opponent’s tricks in combat.

‘Any moment now, though elder Qianying should be here! I have to keep this kid with me!’ Lu Li glared at Ye Wei, like a wolf about to feast on his prey. He clenched his fist, his muscles bulged up, and his hair hardened and stood up like rows of steel needles, a metallic texture appeared in his eyes.

“Crack! Crack!”

Lu Li’s arms were now twice their original size; the muscles rattled as he groaned.

‘High-level Myst stance, Thundercrack Stamp!’ Lu Li’s Qi turned into runes. The runes were wrapping around his arm, and it became electrically charged. He leaped up and struck at Ye Wei. He covered all his escape routes with bolts of runic lightning.

Chapter 181 - Mind Compass

“Rumble!”

The raging energy from Lu Li’s stance pressed Ye Wei into the ground. A palm-shaped mass of runes blocked all of Ye Wei’s escape routes while sharp arcing bolts occasionally struck fissures on the solid rocks close by.

‘Shit, I’m running out of time!’ Ye Wei panicked. He was worried about the returned prime Warrior catching up.

“The Zodiac Sword is as sharp as my mind is when I draw the runes to it.” Ye Wei muttered to himself. His years of training flashed before him, and he felt inspired by the Lu’s Myst stance.

Ye Wei’s eyes went cold; his Qi surged out like a flooding river. “Let me show you what you just taught me!” With will-force on his fingertips, he shaped his Qi to runes, and transformed them into thirty-six Peerless Qi Swords. ‘You can stop a sword, but you can’t stop a damn flooding river!’

The final form of the Peerless Sword consisted of three hundred and sixty Qi swords. It consisted of a fearsome river of refined, sharp bolts of energy. Although Ye Wei was not close to understanding the sky stance’s complete form, he was able imitate the essence of the Zodiac Sword.

Ye Wei relaxed his body and stretched his arms. Both of them straight as a sword, both of them aimed at Lu Li’s stance above his head.

“Zoom! Zoom!”

All thirty-six Qi swords intertwined, glided upwards smoothly against the gravitating lightning palm.

“Bang!”

The bound Qi sword struck the center of Lu Li’s stance. The falling in momentum became an advantage for Ye Wei; the slowness in Lu Li’s attack made it easier to penetrate the lightning palm.

“Plop!”

The connection of the stances was brief. Lu Li was paralyzed by a shrill sound of the Qi sword tearing through his best stance.

“How is this possible!?” The elder’s grandson could not do a thing. He hopelessly watched the runes fall apart. Lu Li never doubted Ye Wei’s strength. He genuinely thought he found a way to defend himself, but he realized he was outclassed.

‘I’ve disappointed you, elder Qianying...’ Lu Li’s body was drowning in the massive stream of Qi created by Ye Wei. His body began to chip and crackle, it was soon covered with bright red. The metallic glow on his skin faded, and a rusty smell grew intense as his blood evaporated.

The young Lu fell before he could even use the scroll he was given.

Ye Wei breathed heavily, imitating a sky stance’s Qi flow at his cultivation level had taken an immense toll on him. His body was weakened, and his face went pale. Though, he managed to drop his opponent.

‘I still have time!’ Ye Wei took Lu Li’s interspatial bag before he reached into his own to find a Green Shade scroll.

“Rip!”

A faint green light wrapped around Ye Wei; he instantly travelled two miles in a flash and headed back into the mountains without hesitation.

‘Ten miles, this is how much I need to keep the distance between me and him. He is faster and stronger than me, I can’t take any risks.’ Ye Wei thought while looking towards the Lu Qianying’s direction. He sensed the warrior’s Qi. He finally felt a safe distance away, but he didn’t entirely feel safe.

“Imbecile!” Lu Qianying screamed. He arrived at the scene five seconds after Ye Wei took off. His bloodshot eyes widened as he saw all the dead bodies. His gaze eventually set on Lu Li’s ravaged corpse. “Don’t you know your limits!? What am I going to tell your granddad!?”

The elder furiously looked around to see if the assassin left and clues. Yet, there was nothing but woodland critters.

“Shit!” Lu Qianying turned around and rushed back to the direction he came from.

“You like playing games, huh!?” He noticed the Qi presence of the other teams fading, but he was too late. He was infuriated by lifeless bodies he saw while departing.

“Useless... F**king, useless!” He counted a dozen more dead bodies. None of them seemed to have struggled before they died.

Lu Qianying lifted his head and clenched his fists. He cried and howled like a crazed animal. His Qi bursted out in all directions.

“Bang!”

The golden energy surge swept the woods. It turned trees into logs and dirt into a thick screen of smoke. All of a sudden, the beautiful nature became a wasteland as if it was stampeded by a pack of king grade wild beasts.

Lu Qianying harshly exhaled and carefully took a scroll from his inside pocket. His eyes twitched regretfully.

The whole scroll was dark. There was a subtle pulsing glow, synchronized with its slow but pressuring aura.

The scroll containing an earth stance was the most valuable possession Lu Qianying carried with him. It was given to him as a gift by the Lu Patriarch when he broke through to become a returned prime Warrior. It contained the Mind Compass stance.

Although the stance was not aggressive at all, its unique function gave it an unmatched value.

Considering one of the victims was the head elder’s grandson, he could possibly be facing capital punishment if he did not capture the person responsible for this outrage.

Lu Qianying ground his teeth. He opened the scroll and tore it swiftly.

“Zoom! Zoom!”

A long rune sequence appeared in the sky. There was a touch of gold to its vivid hue. It kept stretching and eventually covered a hundred miles radius around Lu Xianying.

“Whizz!”

The runes shrank quickly into Lu Qianying’s head. He was suddenly able to see in his mind the life energy of all creatures within a hundred miles. While his Qi energy became undetectable.

“I will catch you this time, you little bastard!” Lu Qianying muttered. He quickly located Ye Wei through the image in his mind. With a heavy stomp, he became a shadow. This shadow zoomed towards Ye Wei like an arrow whizzing through air; nothing stopped him pursuing his target now.

Ye Wei was over thirty miles away from Lu Qianying. He was not aware of the danger he was in.

‘This is a warning. North Hill Bay is the Ye’s land, and the Drakehead is therefore the Ye’s property!’ He was proud of his secret mission. ‘This is not enough, though. I have to kill as many of them as I can. The more time they have to rethink their strategy the better.’

‘There are only three teams left. I should be able to finish them.’ Ye Wei was constantly calculating the best execution for his next move. ‘It’s good that cousin Zhong did not follow, less to worry about when I strike.’

With his extraordinary soul sensitivity, Ye Wei stalked the Lu’s like an opportunistic predator who waited for the best window to strike.

Ye Wei was heading back into the mountain range, avoiding the wild beasts, ‘My revenge has just begun! I will kill every last one of you, one at a time. I will look into your eyes before I crush your hearts!’ He sat next to a tall rock. He took a pill and began to use the Falling Star form.

The Supernova stance was taking a toll on Ye Wei. His Qi was drained and his body was exhausted. He was desperate to recover quickly, so he could finish what he started earlier.

Ye Wei expanded his detection range as he recharged his will-force, but he could not sense Lu Qianying's incoming. He focused on recuperating rather than being on guard since he already left the dangerous scene.

Ye Wei had his eyes closed. The setting sun warmed his cheeks. He was relaxing and resting in the quiet wilderness for the first time after more than half a day of running.

Less than half a minute after he sat down, he felt a strange chilling breeze. He opened his eyes.

“Crack! Crack!”

The breeze intensified; the trees around Ye Wei began to bend towards him.

“Shit! How did I not feel any of this?!” Ye Wei's face changed. He stood up and quickly grabbed the iron talisman from his belt.

“Bang!”

A pressuring presence froze Ye Wei in place. A chubby figure appeared right in front of him.

The elder's hair was fluttering in the wind. The runes under his feet were condensed into small golden clouds after each step he took, thus leaving a trail of golden mist behind him.

There was no primal feathers behind Lu Qianying's back. The returned prime was levitating by his own power; his mastery over natural primal energy.

“Any last words?” Lu Qianying stared furiously down onto Ye Wei. His demeaning gaze intimidated and startled the unsuspecting Ye Wei.

Chapter 182 - The Gathering

Lu Qianying's fearsome presence encaged Ye Wei. While Lu Qianying approached Ye Wei, sequences of runes surged out of his body.

'It's not even a stance yet!' Ye Wei ground his teeth. He could not move an inch. He was bewildered by the returned prime Warrior's control over him.

'Wait, I can take advantage of this!' Ye Wei relaxed his body. Dropping his defenses, he allowed the Lu elder's Qi to penetrate his body. Then he directed the energy to his bones, using it to help transform the runes on his bones.

'I guess this will be good for now, but I need to stay alive!' Ye Wei was enduring the excruciating pain. He held tightly onto his iron talisman, waiting for the best moment to strike back.

Ye Wei slowly lifted his head to take a good look at his returned prime level opponent. His eyes lit up and his mouth opened to speak, "the Drakehead is not something you Lu's can monopolize for your own profit! I've ordered my men to spread the news regarding the Drakehead's location if I didn't return back tonight. I would love to know the royal families would react! If they found out your family was not planning to share the treasures, they will kill you all!"

"What!? Who are you!? How do you know this much!?" Lu Qianying's face drastically changed. He slightly held back his Qi and stared cautiously at Ye Wei.

It was not difficult for Lu Qianying to kill Ye Wei,. However, having everyone learn about the Drakehead, and keeping the Lu's family's trustworthy image and influence, would be..

ILu Qingying couldn't tell if the assassin was bluffing or not. He stared coldly at the masked man, calculating the most appropriate response.

“You are a liar! Show me some kind of identification. Give me a reason not to kill you!” Lu Qianying screamed his ultimatum. His golden Qi became thicker and grasped Ye Wei harder.

Meanwhile, he casted his will-force upon the assassin. Lu Qianying attempted to extract information by mental torture.

However, the returned primed Warrior’s specialty was not effective, Ye Wei’s Sentient vibrated and shone golden, rendering Lu Qianying’s will-force useless.

“I’ve seen this trick before. Even then I was not impressed by it!” Ye Wei chuckled. He hoped by angering the elder would allow him some time to come up with an escape plan.

“Eh?” Lu Qianying was concerned. He was surprised Ye Wei was not affected by his presence. It confirmed his suspicion that this assassin was indeed likely related to a powerful martial family.

The Lu family’s power reigned supreme in the Qing state, but in Lu Qianying’s eyes, the assassin could very well be related to one of the royal families’ rivals. He was therefore afraid to get himself involved in something he would not be able to handle. He hesitated to kill Ye Wei because he didn’t want his family’s future to be in peril.

Furthermore, he could not risk potentially exposing the Lu’s secret mission to the rest of the world.

Thankfully for Ye Wei, a moments hesitation was all that he needed. He quickly leaped forth with the aid of the Starblink stance, ‘this is good, if I feel him approaching I will just use another scroll!’

“You cheeky little...” Lu Qianying’s cold gaze lit up, ‘if I can’t catch you, Lu Li’s death will become my responsibility!’

“Kid, I wouldn’t be annoying now if I were you. In the end, I will be the one torturing you, so you better cooperative.” Lu Qianying’s Qi transformed to a massive hand-shape. It fiercely shot forth towards Ye Wei.

‘My life is worth more than this scroll I guess.’ Ye Wei was startled and

unsure. He kept advancing, not willing to tear the scroll unless absolutely necessary.

“The North Barren Mountains is not men’s territory!” A low, screeching voice sounded. Lu Qianying turned his head. Ye Wei decided against tearing the scroll and instead he observed who was coming towards them.

There was a cruel tone to the shrill voice. Ye Wei ears felt a piercing pain. He was consumed by an unexplainable sense of fear. From what he could feel, the person who just came was at least ten times stronger than Lu Qianying.

Ye Wei’s face became pale. He even blacked out for a second. Thankfully his Sentient was enforced by the mystic mount.

“It’s a demon king...” Lu Qianying gasped. He shivered as he witnessed the disintegration of his runic golden palm. He lifted his head to look at the darkening sky. ‘F**k, I shouldn’t have followed him this deep into the mountains...’

“I knew what you’ve done to the bloodwolves, I was nice enough to ignore how you disturbed the peace... Growl! How dare you come to our home! Are you trying to rub it in my face?” Another rough voice sounded.

“It’s a king grade wild beast!” Lu Qianying exclaimed. His face turned sheet white, and his feet were uncontrollably shaking. He knew he was staring at death itself.

“Rumble!”

A pulse of primal energy shook the sky while a creature that was as large as a small hill stopped by. It was a king grade beast, and its mile long body was covered by dark moss green scales. On top of its armor-guarded spine were four golden wings.

“Quadwing Barren Beast!?” Lu Qianying was unable to remain calm. He took a few clumsy steps back before completely freezing up. He stood as still as a statue in front of all beasts residing in the mountain range.

“Swoosh! Swoosh!”

Thirty-six arcs of fog bows brightened the dark sky. Each of the arcs quickly condensed to lotus paddle shapes and together formed a large rosette seat. A surge of energy created an opening in the middle of the rosette. A man came forth from the dimension within the mysterious structure.

This pale man stood on top of the rosette, glanced at Ye Wei and chuckled. He then scornfully moved his attention to the returned prime Warrior.

Lu Qianying crossed the demon's gaze. His pupils shrunk to the size of a needle's eye. The demon king was in humanoid form. He looked not a day older than twenty-four years of age. His perfectly proportionate face made his sinister presence slightly less repulsive. Yet, the strange glow in his eyes sucked his victim in a captivating, foreboding darkness.

Three more demon king and six more king grade beasts arrived. The demons stood behind the rosette seat while the wild beasts were levitating in the shadow of their leader's wings.

'This is the Skeleton Demon King. He is the third and strongest son of the Nightfall Demon Emperor.' Lu Qianying was uncontrollably stuttering and shivering. He wondered what attracted all these wild beasts and demons when any single one of them could have easily killed him.

'The Skeleton Demon King possessed the strength of a eight-star returned prime Warrior, meaning even the Patriarch could not do anything...' Lu Qianying was spasming.

The Skeleton Demon King stared at Lu Qianying. He was calm; it looked like he had no intention to fight; thought, that did not matter since Lu Qianying was unable to move..

Released from Lu Qianying's enchanted will-force, Ye Wei was free to move. He could not see any difference between a normal human being and the demon before him, but his stomach acted like it was eating him from the inside. He knew he was looking at something evil; therefore, he clenched tighter to the iron talisman and the scroll in his other hand.

Ye Wei had no idea if the gadgets were going to save his life or not. Nevertheless, he had no other choices.

“A one-star returned prime Warrior who dares to wander this deep into the North Barren Mountains, are you insane or just suicidal? You know more than well that this is no place for the living!” The Demon King spoke. He snickered at Lu Qianying’s idiocy. He then nodded at the Quadwing Barren Beast.

“When I heard that some bloodwolves were killed, I thought we were attacked by the Royal Huyan family! Oh well, you can be the appetizer of the night for the young ones.” The winged beast spoke human tongue again. It inhaled air as it lifted its head. A large golden beam of molten lava erupted out from the dark deep abyss of the beast’s mouth.

Lu Qianying was telling his body to move, but it did not work. He defensively watched as the beam flew at him. ‘What is he talking about? Are the royals around? If so, I might have a chance of living!’

The elder did not want to die, thus he bit his tongue. The intense pain reawakened his senses; he then quickly moved out of the impact zone.

Once he landed on the ground and steadied his footing, he channeled his Qi and shaped it into runes with his fingers as quick as he could. Never did he think he would use his best stance for the chance to survive.

‘Forbidden high-level Myst stance, Frozen Goldsplit Sword!’

Chapter 183 - Huyan

The Sky Freeze Formula was not only the precursor to Frozen Goldsplit Sword, it also synergized to forbidden high-level Myst stance, making the cultivator momentarily stronger while using the stance.

Motivated by the will to live, Lu Qianying's Qi flowed faster than usual. He quickly drew thousands of runes. The temperature around his chubby body dropped drastically, and the ground began to frost over, quickly turning white.

“Zoom!”

The returned prime Warrior's runes turned into white flakes. They then gravitated towards Lu Qianying's hand, forming a white Qi blade. Lu Qianying thought he dodged the lava pillar, but he soon realized that the beast's incinerating breath was following him.

He lifted the sword and struck the lava. He knew that he had to somehow deflect the incoming attack since he did not have the speed to avoid it.

“Bang!”

The white Qi sword melted; it evaporated before it even touched the lava. The runes were reduced into a thin layer of scattered energy.

The Quadwing Barren Beast had the strength equivalent to a seven-star returned prime Warrior. Lu Qianying, the one-star returned prime Warrior, was aware his resistance was futile. Nonetheless, he did all he could in hopes that his effort would help him survive.

“Rumble!”

The lava pillar fell onto Lu Qianying. It engulfed him and burrowed him into the ground. The impact caused a brief earthquake. The elder's bloody and burnt body was left motionless in the pit created by the

beast's breath.

“How is he still breathing!?” The Quadwing Barren Beast frowned in shame. The scales on his face made a sizzling sound. He was afraid his allies would doubt his capabilities since he did not kill Lu Qianying as planned.

“Pfft!” The Quadwing Barren Beast grunted. He lifted his hoofs and stomped down at Lu Qianying.

“Swoosh!”

The powerful leg strokes sent shockwaves down onto the pit. The hill around it began to collapse.

‘This guy can’t even defend himself against the beast’s breath!’ Ye Wei ran and found shelter more than three hundred feet away. He was desperately hiding behind a tree, shaking the whole time while tightly holding his talisman.

It was obvious to the young five-star condensed prime Warrior that he could easily become the next victim. He slowed his breath and contained his energy the best he could. He realized he would not be able to escape the beasts and the demons if they were eager to chase.

Just before the hoof was about to take Lu Qianying’s life, as many as twenty beams of light crossed the sky. A thunderous hoarse chant stunned the beast.

A cultivator appeared on the end of each light beams. All of them were returned prime Warrior. and all of them were stronger than Lu Qianying.

“Viled winged abomination! You will pay for injuring a returned prime Warrior!” His powerful voice echoed the mountain range. Seven turquoise Qi blades ignited and flew towards the winged beast’s feet.

The beast’s gigantic blue eyes disdainfully stared at the Qi blades, “Klapa Turquoise Blades? What is the Royal Huyan family doing here!?” He nimbly turned his enormous body and stomped forth. He defended himself with his sturdy hoofs.

“Punish them!” The royal squad’s leader shouted as his stance crashed onto the winged beast’s limbs. While the squad, the returned prime Warriors rushed towards the seven king grade wild beasts to his command.

“You can clean the dirt on the ground with your faces!” The beast was bold. He fearlessly led his pack to the spirited human cultivators.

The Demon King understood his ally was in a tight situation. He lifted his hand and curled it into a claw. He then struck towards the squad leader. “Your kind owe me one!”

The demons beast, and royals started a deadly brawl. The clash of forces created an energy maelstrom in the sky it wrapped the dimension, dark scars, opening to other realms were spreading above the battlefield.

Ye Wei could feel the ground he stood on was shaking tremendously. The trees and rocks were breaking and sinking into the soil.

A surge of energy erupted out of the maelstrom. It hit the ground while a pulsating wave spread outwards through the mountains. The towering hills collapsed and the land cracked where the wave passed through.

To the battlers, Ye Wei was just a part of the environment, unnoticed.

Under the pressure of all the powerful presences, Ye Wei could not move. He too began to sink into the ground, but he was looking a step ahead. He used this outside energy to power the runic transformation on his bones.

‘With the next Supernova evolution, I will be able to have the strength of a returned prime Warrior!’ Ye Wei lusted after power which would give him the ability to escape and protect what his ancestor left to his family.

Ye Wei looked around and spotted Lu Qianying. He could see the elder was wiggling, though, the ground was trembling. He wanted to finish him off, but he was too afraid that one of the royal squad would intervene.

“Ouch!”

The runic patterns on Ye Wei's bones kept transforming. He was overwhelmed and engulfed by pain as the transformation process was about to reach its end.

Even in pain, he was alert, though. Although none of the demons or beast saw him as a threat, he knew he could easily become colossal damage. He felt like he was lounging in a burning room.

“Shit!”

The surface waves were heading towards Ye Wei's direction. He tore an Instant Shadow scroll immediately since he knew he would become miles underground within seconds otherwise.

“Zoom!”

Sequences of runes burst out of the scroll. They wrapped around Ye Wei and made him disappear from this terrifying and threatening scene. Within the same second, a whole globe of light vanished and reappeared a hundred miles away from its original location.

“Rumble!”

After Ye Wei's departure, the battlefield became a thirty miles wide bald spot within the mountains.

“Just in time!” Ye Wei glanced at the brawl from a distance. He gasped as he realized the scale of the destruction. There was no signs of life; only debris and blood remained at the battlefield.

“I would have died if it wasn't for the scroll! I need to become stronger, at least a returned prime Warrior level!” Ye Wei inhaled deeply and muttered. His eyes shone determination.

‘At least I don't have to worry about Lu Qianying now.’ He looked at the destroyed battlefield and thought. ‘If he was willing to kill me, he should have been ready to die as well!’

Ye Wei sat down to adjust the Qi flow in his body but could not focus. He was too agitated and concerned over the beasts, the demons, and the royal family's involvement in the search of the Drakehead.

The images of the battle haunted and teased him. He clenched his fist stood up and looked towards the Drakehead. ‘There is no other way! I have to finish the third Supernova Evolution.’

“I have very limited time to improve my cultivation.” Ye Wei mumbled. He was nervous. If anyone who were involved in the fight moments ago realized how close they were to the treasure, the Drakehead would be lost forever.

“Twenty-four days had past since Lu Ren was killed. The green sandalwood box’s effect is only going to last for another week at most!” Ye Wei bit his nails as he muttered, “They will know Lu Feng’s and my involvement. Then they will be able to guess easily that we have been sabotaging their missions.” He shook his head and continued, “There is another elder stationed close by. Lu Feng’s and my life would be at risk!”

After clearing his mind, Ye Wei sped towards the secret pond. He didn’t have to worry much about the Lu’s wandering close to the Drakehead now that he had killed most of the search team leaders.

Ye Wei leaped upwards to the top of the woods. Using a springing motion from the trees, he achieved an astounding speed. It only took him less than an hour before he was at the pondside again.

The young Runemaster was completely focused. He took a deep breath and wrapped his body with protective layer of Qi and will-force. Immediately, he dove straight down to the bottom of the body of freezing water.

Chapter 184 - Report

Back in Green Moon City, Lu Feng was cultivating, sitting with bent legs on top of one of the City Lord Castle's watchtowers. Although he seemed focused, his twitching brows were showing the opposite.

He had returned to the Lu's base since he lost Ye Wei two days ago. He figured the safest thing to do would be hiding with the Lu's so he would have alibi when asked if he knew anything about what happened at North Hill Bay.

Lu Feng cared about himself more than anything or anyone else, but knowing that he could never complete his revenge alone, he worried about Ye Wei.

'What the hell! It's almost been three days now, Lu Qianying is not back, which can be good, but Ye Wei is not back either. What could have happened!?' Lu Feng stopped his training, opened his eyes and kept glancing every five seconds at the Runic Badge he placed on his lap, refusing to be the first to get in contact as it might tip-off whomever captured Ye Wei.

Being in the blind was a torturous experience, every second was fueled with anxiety. Lu Feng grew nervous, his leg shook, there was nothing else for him to do than wait.

"The box's effect will wear off in six days. When Lu Ren's spirit flame is out, the Lu's will find out what happened..." Lu Feng muttered to himself, "I can't really just count on Ye Wei, it might be the time to give up on the Drakehead and just try to stay alive!"

'I will wait five more days, if I don't hear anything from Ye Wei by then I will leave the city with my father!' Lu Feng clenched his fist, 'and when I leave, I will spread the news regarding the Drakehead!'

"I will make your lives miserable! There are plenty of powerful people

that can take over my revenge!” He glared at the Lu’s office before making his way to his father’s.

At the Drakehead, deep down the pond.

Ye Wei was protected by the second Supernova evolution, he gritted his teeth, enduring the crushing pressure and the extreme temperature as he looked at the green-glowing palace nine hundred feet away.

Ye Wei thought about entering the palace but the intense freezing surges of energy emitted by the palace were stopping him from doing so.

“Zoom! Zoom!”

The cold surges penetrated Ye Wei’s body, reached deep into his bones, pressuring the runes and altering their shape.

Besides a small amount of runes on his skull, all the runes on Ye Wei’s skeleton had transformed into yin yang shapes.

He lusted for power and paddled himself closer to the palace in hopes that he would therefore reach the third Supernova Evolution quicker, which would give him a returned prime Warrior’s strength.

‘Just a bit closer!’ Ye Wei struck a long stroke against the cold water, even though he felt his joints frosting up, he just kept going.

The numbing pain dampened his senses and awareness, Ye Wei only realized his second Supernova evolution was wearing off when he was about to run out of Qi.

He would freeze to death without the stance and he did not have the strength or time to return to the surface.

As the amplification stance wore off, Ye Wei found it increasingly harder to move his body. The ice on him was only getting thicker, constricting him tighter.

‘My life cannot end here!’ He used his last strength to paddle closer to the palace, closed his eyes and used the Falling Star form to flood his system with primal energy. He channeled the rush to his head, forcefully

transforming the runes.

“Bang!”

With the third Supernova Evolution, Ye Wei’s Falling Star form quickly transformed the surrounding energy to his own.

‘Only if I had this kind of strength when I had to fight Lu Qianying...’ Ye Wei was feeling euphoric but also regretful.

“Swoosh!”

Ye Wei jumped out of the water, leaving ripples on the pond surface.

“Shit, am I too late?” Ye Wei just realized he hadn’t contacted Lu Feng since he started dealing with Lu Qianying. He quickly took the Runic Badge out of his interspatial bag.

“I really hope you didn’t do anything stupid...” Aware that his partner was not at all cool-headed, Ye Wei frowned, realizing how his lack of communication could easily be interpreted as his death.

In Ye Wei’s head, the situation regarding the Drakehead was already complicated enough as he saw how the royal family was close to the area; if Lu Feng was to spread the news, there was no doubt that a full scale battle will break out.

Fortunately, Ye Wei was able to get in contact with Lu Feng, they quickly caught up through the Runic Badge. He learned that his partner was not far from setting up the diversion, to put his escape plan in motion.

“Did Lu Qianying die?” Ye Wei was eager to find out what happened in battle within the North Barren Mountains when he was cultivating.

“The elder? He did not die, but he was gravely injured when he was sent back to base...” Lu Feng paused, feeling confused and anxious, “Did you... Did you give him the injuries?”

“No it wasn’t me.” Ye Wei shook his head, suspecting that the royal squad must have gotten out of the battle alive and managed to rescue the Lu elder. “Do you know what happened, did he say anything?”

Although Ye Wei sounded cautious, he now possessed the strength to challenge the elder if he was to use the third Supernova Evolution.

“Wait, if it wasn’t you, then who was it?” Lu Feng felt puzzled as Ye Wei left out the details of his recent venture.

“Demons and beasts were involved. I suspect that they are also searching for something in the area. We will have to be alert at all time from now on.” Ye Wei answered calmly.

“Lu Ren’s spirit flame will die in six days, at that time the Lu family will find out my involvement in sabotaging their expedition, they might even be able to extract images of you if one of the more experienced investigators decided to extract Lu Ren’s memories!” Lu Feng sounded concerned and angry.

“If we are going to be exposed anyway, I would like to somehow lead the demons and beasts to the Lu’s!” He was feeling under pressure, he knew that the Lu’s will be furious and that he would need to do a lot of work just to survive.

On the other hand Ye Wei was feeling less concerned. He knew too little about Lu Feng to care too much, to him the sole purpose of their partnership was about helping each other achieving a goal; he was worried for the Ye family but he knew that his connections could just save his life and get his family out of trouble this one time, if the Lu’s learned his involvement.

“The Qing state branch had confirmed you as the most recent addition to the Seven New Runes, the Lu’s won’t dare to touch you or your family even if your involvement had been exposed!” Lu Feng picked up on Ye Wei’s calm, becoming envious, “However they are known to be treacherous when dealing with their rivals, I would hire some guards if I were you!”

“Lu Feng, can you please hold your tongue about the Drakehead, give me two weeks, I will do what I can to keep the Lu’s busy while I think of a solution.” Ye Wei suggested in a solemn tone.

“Stick to your words! You might not have to worry about yourself but I

do! I will go as far as I can just in case, which means I won't be able to help you personally." Lu Feng sighed, "I am telling you right here and right now, if I feel pressured I *will* spread the news to keep them busy, away from chasing me!"

"When did I ever let you down? Two weeks, that's all I ask for!" Ye Wei's determined gaze was aimed right at Lu Feng.

"We will keep each other updated and share information..." Lu Feng's voice was getting quieter. "I will have to prepare a couple of things before I leave."

Lu Feng's father, one of the three Runemasters based in Green Moon City, had been running his operations and business in the city for over a decade, leaving town was more than just packing and taking off for the father and son.

"Humpf!" Ye Wei put his badge back into his bag, relieved to hear his New Seven Rune status being confirmed. He was ready to matter into his hands now he knew nobody can openly harm him and his family.

Chapter 185 - Starfall

“The third Supernova evolution requires a lot of strength from the user’s body. Now, if I consider my current cultivation and body strength, the amplification effect will not last thirty minutes like it’s supposed to. I will either need to improve my cultivation or somehow refine my Supernova stance within the week.”

“The Lu’s should be worrying more about other matters than just searching for the Drakehead. I should prepare myself while I still can!”

“Cultivating at the Drakehead does solve half of the problems, but I need to somehow recondition my body so that it can take full advantage of the Supernova stance.” Ye Wei thought about the time when he fought Lu Li and Tu Fusheng. He remembered how his opponents were able to gain a commanding position by brute force.

Ye Wei stared at the rippling pond surface, his mind wandered while his eyes just stared into the abyss.

Coming to his senses, Ye Wei pulled out his Runic Badge and flipped through the union’s catalog. He was not impressed by anything weaker than the Earth stances. As he went through page after page, he could not afford anything he was actually interested in.

After a bit of calculation, Ye Wei figured out the quickest way to earn enough contribution tokens for the stance he wanted was to identify and submit the second Vermilion Rune. However, even this relatively easy task would take him more than a week.

Ye Wei was deep inside his head. He imagined what would happen if he was to fight Lu Qianying again with the third Supernova Evolution. He saw himself fighting, but he did not see himself winning, ‘He will outlast me. The returned prime level strength will be meaningless if it only lasts half an hour.’

After coming to this dismal conclusion, he reconsidered other options he had.

‘No, the Zodiac Sword wouldn’t help. I won’t be able to make a significant improvement on it without spending at least a week. Stance-wise, I should be able to do more with the Selenic stances, those should be my focus.’

“This is not good enough! I might need to fight some returned prime Warriors very soon!” Ye Wei kept mumbling to himself. He tried coming up with ideas, ‘Wait, Qi Xiu and Lu Li were physically strong too. Their strength came not from their stances but from the formulas they used when they fought.’

“Maybe I should try to work on Falling Star form? If the formula truly originated from the Ye Supreme Warrior, it should be much more than a cultivating formula.” Ye Wei muttered to himself. The more he ran the formula in his head, the more he was aware of its flaws. He sighed when he became sure that the Falling Star form was still incomplete despite his successful refinement of it two years ago.

Ye Wei shook his head. He needed to rid himself of these negative thoughts. He looked right at the pond wondering if the third Supernova evolution would bring him closer to the underwater palace. “Maybe if I can get in there, I will be able to learn something useful.”

Now the strongest cultivator in the Ye family, it was up to him if his family would survive the Lu’s wrath when worse came to worst.

The young Ye determinedly dived into the pond.

“Splash!”

As before, the water became colder the deeper he went. He did not activate the Supernova stance until he reached the maximum depth his body could endure. This way he could spend just a little more time exploring the depth at his best condition.

Ye Wei activated the newly transformed runes and the compact Qi in his bones by redirecting his will-force into his skull. The yin-yang shaped

runes spun and stopped in a complex coded sequence.

Ye Wei's Qi pulsed and thickened. Within a second, his power crossed the vast gap between condensed prime warrior and returned prime state.

'This is comfortable.' Protected by Qi comparable to that of a one star returned prime Warrior's, he enjoyed the boundless energy flooding his body.

'The supreme palace!' Ye Wei dared not to waste time dwelling on the vigorous energy surges provided by the third Supernova Evolution. He sped up and quickly headed towards the bottom of the pond.

"Swoosh!"

Ye Wei's pulsing Qi reduced the water's pressure. His body glided forward like a serpent through the route with least pressure and current.

Nine hundred feet.

Six Hundred feet.

Three hundred feet.

With just a few powerful paddling strokes, Ye Wei came closer to the palace than he had ever done before.

'What is this!?' His motion had been slowed down considerably. Although he was protected by the amplified Qi, he was startled by the intense cold he suddenly felt. 'What the hell is in the palace!?'

Ye Wei gritted his teeth and kept paddling against the cold current, 'Damn it, I really shouldn't go any further than this!' He stared at the glowing palace.

Two hundred ninety, two hundred eighty.

Despite his enthusiasm, Ye Wei's joints were quickly frosting up. The cold energy waves pressed against him stopping his momentum entirely.

'I honestly thought I could get closer than this.' Ye Wei's lips were pale purple. His shaking body kept losing strength. He decided to use the Falling Star form to absorb energy around him to warm his body up.

Despite the effort, Ye Wei was not able to get any closer.

“Zap!”

The palace shook. The letters on its facade shone bright, and the golden beams of light were flowing and intertwining. After seconds of thickening and condensing, the golden beams merged into one and sprang out rapidly towards Ye Wei’s forehead connecting the palace to Ye Wei.

“Bang!”

Ye Wei’s reflex was no match for the speed of light. He could not react, and he felt an immense pain in his head.

After entering Ye Wei’s body, the surge of golden energy heated up his blood. His veins were expanding, the soul crushing agony was only intensifying as the heat rose.

The temperature went from one extreme to the other. The freezing energy was not capable of neutralizing the heat that was flowing through Ye Wei’s veins. Ye Wei felt increasingly dizzy. His powerful Sentient was the only thing keeping him sane.

Ye Wei’s muscles were tensing up, and he was blinded by the golden light that stunned him. Barely conscious, he still knew once Supernova effect fades, the energy would consume him and end his life.

Held in place by the mystic power of the palace, Ye Wei’s body ignored his mind’s order to leave. He could not escape despite his strong will.

‘Argh!’

In extreme pain, Ye Wei growled and accidentally engulfed some of the freezing water. The blood that leaked out of his mouth dyed the water around him pink.

His hot blood began to shine just when his consciousness was fading away because of the pain. The spots of sparkles in his blood resembled the milky way; these dots of light were then transported to his head from multiple sections of his veins all over his body.

“Zoom! Zoom!”

The star-like energy sparks melted into the hot, golden energy surge. Just within a few breaths the vigorous golden energy calmed down and infused itself into Ye Wei’s blood.

Ye Wei’s pain vanished as the bright light died down in his veins. All that was left in his blood from the golden surge was a mass of runes.

‘These are...’ Ye Wei slowly regained consciousness. His Sentient identified the runes, ‘These are similar to the runes that make up the Falling Star form!’

‘Could these be?’ Ye Wei tried to link the pieces together. He realized the golden surge could have been infused by the Ye Supreme’s will.

‘Considering my mediocre cultivation, the mystic mount presence alone should not have been enough to keep me alive through that surge. If that’s the case, it might have been the power in my blood, the power of Ye Yu Supreme, that saved me!’

Ye Wei bent his legs and sank to the pond’s bottom. He channeled his Qi and felt that the runes in his blood were speeding up his natural energy flow in his meridians.

With the golden energy filling Ye Wei’s blood, he now became a part of the palace’s power. He was initiated into his family’s bloodline. He realized the greatness the pain provided him “The golden beam activated my bloodline’s true power!’ Ye Wei opened his eyes wide. He felt euphoria all over. ‘These are very likely to be the runes I need to complete the Falling Star form!’

‘Thank you so very much! I am grateful’ Ye Wei respectfully glanced and bowed slightly towards the palace. He turned around and stomped the pond bed. Pushing himself up, he raced back to the surface as his Supernova stance faded.

“Splash!”

Ye Wei leaped out of the pond and expanded his Qi. His robe fluttered wet but quickly dried because of his abnormally high body temperature.

“By using the Ye’s runes, I will finally complete the Ye’s cultivation formula.” Ye Wei told himself. Wasting no time, he began to introduce the runes in his blood into the Falling Star form as he purified the energy he just absorbed along with it.

‘I will refine this formula until I unveil its secret power!’ Ye Wei closed his eyes. Calming his mind, he aimed at getting rid of random thoughts and focusing.

He sat next to the pond. He sat motionless as a statue of Buddha, analyzing over ten thousand runes with his Sentient while he absorbed the primal energy around him with Falling Star form. , His body fell asleep, but his mind was completely awake.

Chapter 186 - Exposed

At the City Lord's castle, inside the quarters where the Lu's assigned to themselves, a red-haired white-robed slim old man sat in the middle of a hall. He was scolding while tens of condensed prime Warriors stood and listen with their heads facing down.

The slim figure was Lu Qianhuan, three-star returned prime Warrior and Lu Qianying's older brother.

For a whole week, the elder had been dissatisfied with the complicated mess the North Hill Bay mission had developed to, from Lu Ren's disappearance caused by wild beasts attack to the assassination of Lu Li and tens of the family's condensed prime Warriors.

If royal Huyan's men did not intervene, his own younger brother would have died in the North Barren Mountains. Although the royal family's squad left right after delivering Lu Qianying without saying much, Lu Qianhuan was more than sure that the royals were aware of what the Lu's were up to around the area.

The whole situation was bothering the elder as his effort might all be in vain if the Huyan family was to get involved, being the royal's ally might mean that they will get nothing out of the Drakehead.

The mission had been considered a failure by the Lu Patriarch himself since he heard the news about their losses but none about succeeding. Not only the patriarch was dissatisfied, the men under his command were also living in fear and had been expressing their negativities. Being pressured from above and under, Lu Qianhuan was experiencing great stress, he was blaming everything on the masked assassin and whomever was behind the assaults.

"Lu Ren had been missing for a month, I am pretty sure that he had died. I will be surprised if his disappearance is not related to the masked

boy! Still no news on him? Anyone?”

‘I would love to find out who you are, I have ways to make you suffer a painful death!’ Thought Lu Qianhuan, his face was ashen, his eyes were dark and aggressive like a hungry predator.

“Pop!”

Lu Ren’s spirit flame flickered, and the elder immediately spotted it with his widened eyes. He had been keeping the candle close since it arrived from the family’s ancestral shrine.

“I would love to see who was responsible for all this mess!” Lu Qianhuan had been waiting for the flame to die, he stared as the fire became dim.

‘Spirit smoke!’ Lu Qianhuan hands flew in air, his hand seals created a long rune sequence that flew towards the smoke cloud that appeared when the fire died.

“Swoosh!”

Lu Qianhuan and all the other cultivators simultaneously focused on the center of the hall as the rune sequence sculpted the smoke, the screen of smog recreated what Lu Ren saw right before his death.

“That’s Lu Feng!”

Everyone in the hall recognized the new family member’s face, they gasped for air, shocked and infuriated.

“Ungrateful bastard!” The delicate teacup in Lu Qianhuan’s hand turned into dust. He stood up and shouted in fury, “Catch him! Break his arms and legs if he tries anything funny!”

“Yes sir!” The Lu’s condensed prime Warriors gave a synchronized answer without hesitation, five of them bowed immediately.

None of them expected the aspiring Runemaster, the new addition to the family to be a cold-blooded betrayer. They were all shocked as they thought Lu Feng would be more thankful, to prove his worth instead of murdering his own clan, sabotaging an important mission.

“Wait, don’t go yet! The bastard is not strong enough to kill Lu Ran, let’s see if I get more information out of the smoke!” Lu Qianhuan channeled his Qi, the image went further back in time.

“Zoom! Zoom!”

Just when the five condensed prime Warriors turned their heads, they saw the smoke screen changing its shape, it became the scene of the Selenic Triple Sword stance being used and its user behind the strikes.

“Whoever kills a Lu, and the killer’s ten closest kinship will be executed!” Lu Qianhuan’s face turned dark, his cold words echoed the walls, “Find out who it is! I don’t want him walking on this planet!”

The elder was merciless, he was ready to kill anyone who threatened the Lu’s reputation and authority within Qing state.

“This is... Ye Wei!? I am pretty sure, sir. This is Ye Wei, from the Green Moon City’s Ye family!” Lu De, who was sent to the Ye Mansion not long ago recognized the face, “He is sixteen but already a condensed prime Warrior, he is a three-star Runemaster.”

“Do you know him?” Lu Qianhuan stared at Lu De.

“Sir, I do not know him personally. I’ve met him once and was intrigued by him, so I found out more about him.” Lu De kept eye contact with the furious elder, shivered as he reported solemnly.

“I want Ye Wei here and I want their family mansion locked down, not even a fly may leave the premises!” The skinny elder gave the orders with a straight face.

“But...” Lu De hesitated, looking at the elder with fear in his eyes, “Sir, he is Master Yi’s legacy apprentice.”

“Master Yi’s only legacy apprentice? That’s him!?” Lu Qianhuan frowned. He had heard of Master Yi even before researching Green Moon City and the neighbouring areas, and it was him who gave the orders not to mess with the ten-star Runemaster when the Lu’s took over the city.

Lu Qianhuan’s eyes went cold, he grunted and said, “No, not this time!

He has to die, even if he is protected by Master Yi!”

He was not willing to anger Master Yi, but that was just him respecting the well established Runemaster. The proof of Ye Wei’s involvement and his suspicion of Ye Wei being the masked assassin justified his cause.

“But...” Lu De smiled bitterly, “Ten days ago, the Runemaster Union’s Qing state headquarter had listed Ye Wei as one of the Seven New Runes. I am sorry you did not hear about this news earlier, sir, but I didn’t think it would be relevant!”

“A new rune!?” The elder gritted his teeth. Having been one of the best strategists in the Lu family for years, Lu Qianhuan knew that Ye Wei was out of his reach from what he could gather. He had enough experience dealing with the union to know what matters they take seriously.

“What a brash little boy! He is inconveniently brave.” Lu Qianhuan’s fists were tightly clenched, his gaze was getting colder and colder.

‘Seven New Runes, it is just a title, just because nobody in the entire Zhou dynasty dares to touch you openly does not mean I can’t kill you from the dark!’ Lu Qianhuan thought to himself, beginning to calculate. His experience had armed him with many dirty tricks. “Lock down the Ye family, don’t hurt anyone yet, find out everything about them and pressure them accordingly.”

‘You have to blow smoke into the hole to catch a rat!’ Lu Qianhuan narrowed his eyes, “Remember his face, I want to know as soon as possible if anyof you saw him outside of Green Moon City, if you see a chance to kill him, do it, I want no witnesses.”

“I will send my brother back to the bay area once he fully recovered, he should be ready again in a day at most, don’t do anything too stupid before he is back in the field.”

When the Lu’s men left the meeting, Lu Feng had long left Green Moon City with his father Master Mu. The Lu’s men had searched both Lu Feng’s and his father’s houses, they were forced to return to the furious elder with more bad news.

“For Sages’ sake!” Lu Qianhuan screamed and demolished a wall with his bare knuckles, he was completely maddened. He had no way of venting out this much resentment. “I want you to start rumors about the Ye’s, I want their city to hate them!”

Before the sun rose again, made up news about the Ye’s involvement in the black markets and smuggling had spreaded, citizens were talking about the Ye’s bribing the City Lord.

Miles from Green Moon City, Lu Feng had heard all of these rumors from his contacts.

“They Lu’s are onto your family, the people in Green Moon City will start hating the Ye’s, make sure the patriarch knows that Lu Qianhuan is starting rumors about your family, if things are not dealt with delicately, the Lu’s will have a reason to wipe out the Ye’s.” Lu Feng knew exactly how these games were played, he decided to warn Ye Wei by leaving a message. “The Lu’s had done this many times, this is only the beginning...”

“Thank you for notifying me.” Ye Wei replied within seconds the first message was sent.

“Do not return to the Ye Mansion just yet, you will be watched and followed if they spot you at all,” Lu Feng had grown fond of Ye Wei without realizing since the partnership started.

“I get it, you should take care of yourself too.” Ye Wei laid the badge down, he looked at the pond next to him then faced south. ‘If anything happened to anyone in our family, I will count the Lu family responsible and I will make them pay!’

Ye Wei went back to cultivating, it was hard to put his worry aside but he knew better, he knew that he would need to become stronger now the conflict had scaled up immensely.

Chapter 187 - Cosmic Rage

“One step at a time, right now, I need to refine the Falling Star form.” Ye Wei took a deep breath. Upon releasing his breath, he let go of all his worries and closed his eyes.

Ye Wei's Soul Sensitivity was extraordinary due to his enhanced Sentient, which made stance and formula refinement relatively easy tasks. However, at high-level Myst grade, the Falling Star form's structure was thousands of times more intricate and complex than any of his previous stances.

The runes injected into his blood by the palace was not only inspiring, they were the foundation of the Supreme Falling Star form.

Three days had passed. Ye Wei had not moved a muscle since he sat down next to the pond; his mind was completely occupied by the rune combinations and QI flow.

While Ye Wei was perfecting his stance formation, Lu Qianying had just recovered from his injuries with the help of heavy medication prescribed by the best doctors around the area. He was sent right back into the wilderness an hour after he could stand. Although his body was still a bit stiff, he was enthusiastic and, most importantly, eager to seek revenge.

The chubby elder had always mistaken the assassin to be someone sent by a superpower, when he was told by his brother that it was a local who nearly cause his death, he was furious, wanted to avenge his men and wanted revenge.

Surrounded by thousand miles of mountain range, the North Hill Bay area stretched long, its heavy vegetation and complex landform made it difficult for the Lu's to carry out their search quickly.

Learned from his near death experience, Lu Qianying had ordered his

men to stay away from the mountain area, he knew that he had no way to protect anyone against the creatures that threatened his life.

Lu Qianying was aware that the likelihood of his teams capturing Ye Wei was low, that all they could do was to wait and keep alert. He left the more physical tasks for his subordinates so that he could focus on regaining strength and his recovery.

Not being able to find Ye Wei nor Lu Feng, the Lu's were letting out their anger onto the Ye family. As the rumors flew in Green Moon City none of the Ye's dared stepping outside their front gate.

The Ye's were nervous, they wanted news from Ye Wei, wanted to know if he was okay but on the other hand they did not want to hear anything from the young Runemaster, afraid that the Lu's would have a way to find out Ye Wei's whereabouts if they did get into contact.

North Hill Bay.

Ye Wei was still in a zen state, his robe fluttered in the wind while his body still as a statue. The night was lit by the moon and stars, he opened his eyes wide, the thousands rune long sequence just finished resembling itself in his Sentient.

The rune sequence condensed and intertwined formed a semi-transparent humanoid shaped figure, it shone bright and crossed the Sentient's boundary, entered Ye Wei's meridians.

"This is it! I can feel the difference!" Led by the runes, the Qi within his body started circulating in a new route, Ye Wei exclaimed as the energy within him ran smoother and quicker than it ever did.

"Bang!" A white pillar shone down from the heavens.

Ye Wei bathed in the pillar of light, the pores on his skin opened up and rapidly sucked in the cosmic energy, the energy surges raged and rushed through his meridians. The new reincarnation of the Falling Star form processed the raw power, converting the raging surges into storable Qi. Inside his dantian, the silver ball of energy rattled and expanded, as

the result, the six crack appeared.

“This is now an Earth grade formula! I can feel there is a stance within this sequence too, I have to find out what it is!” Ye Wei was not overly excited about his breakthrough, instead more interested in developing the Falling Star form even further.

‘I can’t waste this!’ Ye Wei thought to himself, he closed his eyes and focused on processing the cosmic energy.

The quicker the Earth grade formula ran, the hotter the cosmic energy became. The primal energy from his surrounding began to condense into globes of light, floated towards the light pillar.

The concentrated primal energy balls quickly merged into the light pillar, the momentum of these balls sped up the energy absorption in all.

“Is this part of the formula!?” Ye Wei tried to follow the energy movement with his eyes but got blinded, he instead felt the flow with his outstanding soul sensitivity. He was surprised to find out how effective the Falling Star form had become.

Although the Supreme Falling Star form was powerful, the extreme speed Ye Wei absorbed the comic energy was caused by the power in his veins. Feeling euphoric because of his successful refinement, Ye Wei was not aware of his blood’s involvement.

‘If the Falling Star form’s body strengthening effect is as good as the Star Shifter formula from Qi Xiu and the Titanic formula of the Lu’s I could probably just walk into the Lu’s base and fight them now...’

Now the his cultivation formula had been improved over high-level Myst grade, Ye Wei was expecting his new meridian routing to alter his body strength, like Qi Xiu whose meridians was flexible, thus allowed him to evenly spread enemy strikes’ impact; Lu Li whose meridians were lifted close to his skin, thus protected him from physical attacks.

‘A Supreme had worked on this formula, I would love to see if it has similar hidden effects.’ Ye Wei relaxed his muscles, let the energy fill him as quickly and as much as he could in hopes that it will activate whatever

effect there was within.

Ye Wei's cultivation was improving rapidly, although he was in pain as meridians were overloaded, he did not wish to slow the Falling Star form down even the slightest.

The rampaging surges, the blend of cosmic and natural primal energy were flooding into and expanding his dantian. Within seconds of sponging, another golden crack appeared on the energy ball.

The pillar of cosmic energy did not get any thinner nor did it slow down, even after powering two breakthroughs it was as thick and the energy was dense as when it dropped down from the sky.

Ye Wei could feel a fissure forming on the energy ball in his dantian, he could feel his blood boiling as his blood transformed into a light shade of rose gold.

'Happy exploding! Kid! You won't be able to handle your supreme blood!' A hoarse voice sounded in Ye Wei's mind.

Ye Wei's hopefulness became fear, after hearing the progenitor's voice, his pain had significantly intensified.

'What is he going on about!?' He became confused and frustrated.

The silver ball of energy throbbed faster and faster, the eighth golden crack was shining brighter. Ye Wei's Sentient shook as the energy in his dantian drifted out of control.

Although Ye Wei was almost at eight-star condensed prime level, his dantian was about to explode. If he was could not control within the next minute he would be blown into pieces.

"Shit!"

Ye Wei's face became pale, his system was saturated but he had no way of stopping the cosmic energy entering his body. His skin was stretched, cracked and therefore covered in blood.

The situation had suddenly become life-threatening.

With a bitter smile on his face, Ye Wei tried to remain calm as he could

while he tried to figure out a solution. ‘I am not ready for the Falling Star form, my body is too weak for it!’

Despite his greatest efforts, Ye Wei failed to gain control over the situation, the raging primal energy kept entering his body. Not only did he fail to slow the surge down, it just kept accelerating within his meridians, enlarging his body and stretching his skin.

“Argggghh! This has to stop!” Ye Wei’s bloody face was twitching in pain, he was overwhelmed by pain and despair. ‘If I die, my whole family will be killed by the Lu’s...’

Ye Wei’s body kept expanding, turned into the shape of a ball.

The Falling Star form reached its culmination, it was beginning to digest the cosmic energy, stabilizing the Qi flow in Ye Wei’s body.

Ye Wei shivered, a sequence of bright runes escaped his meridians, left his body from right between his eyes.

Chapter 188 - Result

The runes scattered, regathered and formed a miniature star-like orb. the dense surge of cosmic energy, instead of entering Ye Wei's body, rushed into the orb.

'Did you just saved my life again?' Ye Wei thankfully looked at the pond. He felt exhausted and, yet, exalted. His white robe was stained red from blood and soaked with sweat.

The young Runemaster was full of questions. He quietly looked at the fist-sized orb, feeling the runes and energy flow within, 'what is this? It feels like a stance, is it safe?' His hand hovered forward, hesitant to touch it.

"Zoom! Zoom! Zoom!"

The orb engulfed the raging cosmic energy, and it grew to the size of a large melon. The runes inside it were twinkling, whizzing and swirling. It took only ten minutes before the white light pillar disappeared and was consumed by the star orb.

The orb was filled with runes, but Ye Wei could not feel any energy disturbance.

"What are you?" Ye Wei took a deep breath. He wrapped the orb with his will-force, attempting to figure out the unknown object's properties.

"Zoom!"

Upon contact with Ye Wei's will force, the orb transformed into an elongated shape and began to squirm. After seconds of pulsing, the light orb turned into a human form.

Ye Wei stared at the bright shape. He could see its face was featureless, but its stature and height reminded him of himself.

"Buzz! Buzz!"

The bright shape became more defined; features could be discerned. It's fuzzy aura simmered. Its eyes slowly opened. It stared right back at Ye Wei, acknowledging his presence.

"This is..." Ye Wei widened his eyes. He was startled by the clone of himself that was standing just inches away.

An unprecedented weird feeling overwhelmed Ye Wei. Not only did the bright figure look the same as himself, he felt that he had grown extra limbs.

Ye Wei wiggled his toes a dozen times. He could see and feel the clone was mirroring his movements. After a few more shrugs and shakes, he learned to control the clone's movement without moving his own limbs.

'Right uppercut!'

"Bang!"

The star clone's right fist immediately flew forth and up. It tore through the air with immense momentum.

Although now a seven-star condensed prime Warrior, Ye Wei was knocked back ten meters by the blazing wind stirred up by the clone's punch.

"By the sages name!" Ye Wei expressed an air of utter shock on his face; his eyes stared at his star clone, 'it is as strong as a returned prime Warrior even without the Supernova stance!?'

Ye Wei then made his clone use a few hand seals, but no runes came out. 'Oh, that's a shame!' He was slightly disappointed by his clone, but, overall, he felt positive discovering such a powerful perk that came with the Supreme Falling Star form.

Ye Wei sat himself down and manipulated the star clone to do the same. He saw that the clone technique would have room for improvement once he became stronger.

"Lu Qianying, I don't know how you survived the last time. But I will personally make sure you don't live through our next encounter!" With

his fist tightly clenched, he felt his newfound strength. This new strength enlivened him to make such a daring proposal that last time he saw Lu Qianying he would have never made.

He felt like a new man, and, in some ways, he was. Now, he was a seven-star condensed prime Warrior who had just absorbed the cosmic energy. He felt confident to be able to defeat Lu Qingying under the third Supernova Evolution's effect.

In a combat situation, he would be capable of taking on multiple returned prime Warriors with the light clone in play.

‘The light clone will be my hidden aces! If I could find a way to improve it, I will literally be twice as strong as I am!’

“Now let's get things done!” Ye Wei set his eyes on the clone and blinked. It shrank back to a small ball shape again. The twinkling orb then flew back into Ye Wei's head.

As Ye Wei broke through to become a seven-star condensed prime Warrior, his will-force detection reach expanded to a fifty-mile radius while boosted by the mystic mount presence in his Sentient.

‘Ha! Cowards!’ He could feel that the Lu's were close to each other unlike the last time they searched the area. “Strength in numbers indeed!” Ye Wei joked to himself sarcastically.

“Swoosh!”

Ye Wei stomped the ground. He suddenly turned into a flash of light and left the Drakehead area. There was no fear in his mind. He knew he was the hunter not the hunted.

“We are going eastward!” Lu Qianying was frustrated. He was struggling to balance speed with safety.

“That little bastard is somewhere around here!” He said viciously. There was nothing he wanted more than to avenge the Lu's condensed prime Warriors by redeeming himself. This would only be done by

capturing Ye Wei.

“You can hide but your family can’t! They are sitting ducks!” Lu Qianying’s cry echoed throughout the woods, “you too, are going to die with them! If you keep hiding, I will make sure our men break every bone in your body and flay every inch of your skin when we have you cornered!”

Since his recovery, Lu Qianying had shifted his anger onto the Ye family because Ye Wei was nowhere to be found. Although he was ordered not to make a move, he consistently started rumors about the Ye’s and supported the Ye’s rivals with weapons and scrolls.

Despite Master Yi’s involvement in defending the Ye’s, a few cultivators from the Ye family were injured and hurt in seemingly random brawls and feuds.

“You know what? I heard the Ye’s ancestral grave is close by. We should have a look over there!” the chubby elder pointed his fingers to the Drakehead’s direction.

At the beginning of the search Lu Qianying was convinced that Ye Wei could still be close to the North Barren Mountain range, but after a long thought, he realized defending the Ye’s land could have been one of Ye Wei’s many reasons for wandering in the bay area to begin with.

The Lu’s men were all on their toes, they knew that the elder was stressed even on the verge of losing his sanity. They were just taking one order at a time. No matter how silly it may seem, they were not willing to argue or discuss strategy with their unreasonable leader.

“Lu Qianying, you are a lucky one aren’t you?” A beckoning voice sounded in the Lu’s ears, “I really thought you died after you were sneezed on by the horse!”

“You little dog!” Lu Qianying’s face flushed flaming red as if someone slapped him. He did not expect to be called out on something he was ashamed of.

None of the Lu’s apart from the family council knew that he was

gravely injured by a wild beast. The team of condensed prime Warriors were all shocked.

“So the sighting reports were legitimate!?”

“We are under equipped!”

They all looked at their leader, the chubby elder. Resentment appeared in their eyes. Their respect and fear for their leader turned into doubt and nervousness.

“You bastard! I have been waiting for you!” Lu Qianying’s face contorted. His bloodthirsty smile widened. “Show yourself you mouthy coward!”

Despite the infuriating comments, Lu Qianying did not mind that Ye Wei appeared in the Bay area at all, to him it was almost a gift. He planned to make the illegal act of killing a Seven New Rune member look like an accident and blame it onto the breast and demons if ever questioned.

The cubby elder looked up at the canopy of the woods where Ye Wei’s voice came from. He was boiling up; the idea of a violent revenge put a twisted smile on his face.

Without moving a muscle, a pulsing wave of golden Qi bursted out of Lu Qianying’s body. It swept the leafy ground and rose along the trees.

“Kushuuu!”

The thick trucks swung vigorously, but Ye Wei stood steadily on top of one of the shaking trees as if nothing happened.

Ye Wei coldly glared down at the chubby elder. His face was stoic; he acted as if he hadn’t heard a word. His arms folded behind his back, a sequence of runes leaked out his body. The temperature around him drastically dropped.

The young Runemaster was less than pleased with Lu Qianying’s threatening words, but he was not going to argue or reason with the Lu. Instead, he was going to express his antipathy with action.

“Words won’t save you or your men.” Ye Wei mutter impassively to himself. He was tired of the retaliating Lu’s.

The runes around Ye Wei suddenly disappeared and turned into an invisible shockwave, blasting down onto the ground.

Lu Qianying was not affected by the shockwave, but his men’s faces turned pale. Despite their best efforts, they were struggling to stay on their feet.

“All of you are an embarrassment to the family name!” The elder shouted, dissatisfied. Seconds later, he could feel the shockwave intensifying. ‘What!? This kid was no stronger than a ten-star condensed prime Warrior just days ago!’

“What happened boy? Did your master give you some pills to take!?” Lu Qianying shouted at Ye Wei and then turned to his men, “don’t be scared! We outnumber him!”

Actually, Lu Qianying did not care about his men living or not. His heart was, clouded by hatred, and he cared little for anything else than eradicating the reason of his humiliation.

“What a surprise! I thought you were going to run like a chicken again!” A golden Qi storm was brewing around Lu Qianying as the runes around him condensed.

The intense golden hue of Lu Qianying’s Qi represented his pride as a returned prime Warrior. His energy was twice as dense as the Qi that flowed in condensed prime Warriors’ meridians.

“Die!” The chubby elder channeled the Qi to his palm. With a quick swipe he shot a pillar of blinding golden runic energy exactly to where Ye Wei stood.

Chapter 189 - Chase

“Boom!

The golden beam heated up everything in its path. Leaves and branches were scorched. The crackling noise left the Lu's condensed prime Warriors in shock. They realized they would lose their lives if the stance struck them.

The light pillar was focused at Ye Wei, but its energy was pressing onto him, engulfing him.

‘This is why training is important, Lu Quiyang...’ Ye Wei calmly looked at the powerful pillar. He was glad that he could now empower his body's strength to returned prime level.

‘And I have the blood of a Supreme!’ The yin yang shaped runes on Ye Wei's bones lit up. His Qi flowed through his body accelerating and compressing. He clenched his fist and endured the pain that came with the process.

“Crack! Crack! Crack!”

Ye Wei's Qi leaked out of his body, creating a continuous popping noise.

‘Third Supernova evolution!’ Ye Wei, attached to the tree, swung back and forth; he used the oscillating momentum to back up his punch.

His golden fist drew a bright arc in the sky, aimed downwards at Lu Qianying's strike. A high-pitched shrill sound deafened the elder's men.

“Bang”

The moment these two powerful strikes met the mountains shook. All of the Lu's were quick enough to react. They leaped back a few hundred yards. So stunned were they that they, simultaneously looked towards the tree Ye Wei stood on through a screen of smoke and dust.

Ye Wei was steadily as a rock even while in his relaxed form. His fist held Lu Qingying's golden energy pillar in place.

'We are suppose to capture him? How?' All the Lu's condensed prime Warriors became doubtful; they looked towards the messy red-haired figure in front of them for some guidance.

Ye Wei's powerful Qi presence was slightly suffocating them. Nonetheless, apart from fearing their enemy, the Lu's were also admiring the young talent and respected what they did not expect to see.

'Explode!' The Qi on Ye Wei's hand further condensed. Runes flew out of his fingertips. Within a second, his hand was covered in a layer of runes; he clenched his fist and pushed it into the light pillar.

"Bang!"

Lu Qianying was sure his palm strike could drop Ye Wei like a fly. He was in deep shock as he witnessed its disintegration. Shards of his Qi and runes rained down from the sky, assailing the ground with thousands of meters-deep holes.

The ground shook and the residual shockwaves spread from the points of impact. While some of the Lu's condensed prime Warriors were able to marginally dodge the scattered shockwaves, some were less agile to do so.

Half of the cultivators Lu Qianying brought with him were knocked off their feet. They were sent flying hundreds of feet away and no longer in the condition to fight.

The Lu's tensed posture made Ye Wei's gentle descend look more graceful than it actually was. He walked down from the top of a tree as if there was an invisible staircase. Each step he took sent forth a golden energy pulse.

"You are not even a returned prime Warrior! How could you have lived through my palm strike unharmed?!" Lu Qianying's competitive spirit lit up. He furiously clenched his fist.

"Fatty, I am disappointed. I thought you strength was on a higher level than this!" Ye Wei stared coldly at Lu Qianying. His confidence and

cockiness grew as he learned just how strong he could be under the third Supernova Evolution's effect. 'I am stronger than a one-star returned prime Warrior!'

Ye Wei could feel a tingling sensation. It seemed the texture of his Qi was altered by the Supernova stance.

"Little bastard! You will pay for your arrogance!" Lu Qianying was appalled at Ye Wei's arrogance. His face was dark as a raincloud. He couldn't get his head around the fact Ye Wei, who had run from him like a defenseless rabbit, was now strong enough to confront him face to face.

Feeling threatened by the speed of Ye Wei's exponential growth, Lu Qianying was aggravated. He was prepared to kill the youngster when he was still be able to, but now? Could he still kill this transformed Ye Wei?.

Lu Qianying's body shook; a surge of golden Qi bursted out from his dantain. The primal energy around him began to spin like a whirlpool.

"Bang!"

The ground underneath Lu Qianying began to crack. The ten feet wide fissures spread over a mile; small hills afar were crumbling and falling flat.

Lu Qianying was not holding anything back. He showcased his returned prime level strength. The condensed prime Warriors he brought with him were knocked off their feet. They were too shocked to even cheer for their leader.

"Ye Wei! I will end your family after I kill you!" Lu Qianying shouted. His glared at Ye Wei like a hungry wolf set on devouring his prey. He was determined to destroy his opponent with haste. 'High-level Myst stance, Golden Mountain Seal!'

The whirlpool around the chubby elder turned into a length of runes, which then split and formed the frame of a pyramid shape.

"Same trick as last time?" Ye Wei's will-force diffused outwards. He calmly analysed the energy flow within the pyramid, feeling each rune's transition. "You are as stupid as you are stubborn."

This time Ye Wei did not want to dodge or obtain help from wild beasts. He confronted the stance and felt ready to neutralize the incoming threat with his own strength.

“Get crushed!” Lu Qianying screamed as he lowered his hand, the Qi pyramid descended and quickly fell onto Ye Wei.

“Rumble!”

The Lu’s condensed prime Warriors were scared by the shrill noise created from stance falling. They jumped and swiftly ran away from Ye Wei’s location, struggling to keep their balance on the quaking ground.

“I would be killed by this stance if I fought you yesterday!” Ye Wei exclaimed. He narrowed his eyes and flipped his hand, grunted and swiped.

‘Peerless Qi Sword!’

All thirty-six sharp bolts of Qi merged together. He sliced through the thickened air and crashed into the pyramid shape.

Ye Wei did not have time to work on the Zodiac Sword stance, but now that his Qi was amplified to a returned prime level, his Qi sword wads multiple times sharper and harder than it had even been.

“Bang!”

Ye Wei’s sword flew forth and kept extending itself. Its force and momentum resembled a flooded river. It quietly turned the trees and rocks on its path into powder.

The sound of Ye Wei’s sharp Qi sword piercing the runic pyramid was almost inaudible.

“Now what?!” Ye Wei’s voice struck like thunder, striking each of the Lu’s thus deafened them simultaneously.

The thirty-six strands of Qi swords broke up on Ye Wei’s command. Each of them absorbed more primal energy and then reunited; the swords rushed towards Lu Qianying at an incredible speed.

Lu Qianying assessed the situation. He quickly realized there was no

way for him to dodge the incoming strike as the dimensions of Ye Wei's Qi swords were too great. With his will force and a chain of hand seals, he turned the golden Qi around him into layers of runic armor.

“Clang! Clang! Clang!”

The Qi sword crushed into Lu Qianying as an oncoming flashflood. It released bright sparks of runic gold into the air. His armor was shattered and eroded away in seconds.

Lu Qianying was bleeding heavily. He was knocked off balance completely and flew off like a stringless kite.

“How is this even possible!?” Lu Qianying's widened eyes. His eyes peered through the dust and light and just couldn't quite believe a child had just perfectly countered both his offensive and defensive stance with one strike.

“How did this little bastard become this strong in just a few days? It's impossible!” Lu Qianying thought to himself as he flew backwards, leaving a trail of dust behind. “Unless...”

Ye Wei was already making his next move while Lu Qianying was still startled. His figure became blurred, and his palm was following the dust trail. ‘I have to kill him quickly, I can't deal with the royal family's force.’ Ye Wei decided.

“Brother, Ye Wei is here, and he was stronger than he was days ago. I am guessing that he found the Drakehead! I can't fight him, not on my own.” Lu Qianying spoke to the rune in his palm while running away from Ye Wei. After finishing the message, he clenched his fist and the rune vanished.

“Hang in there, I am on my way!” Lu Qianhuan immediately received the message, he muttered and sped out of the City Lord's castle. He headed north towards the bay area. “What do you mean you can't handle him? I know you are injured, but you are a returned prime Warrior for sages' sake!”

‘Is that kid a returned prime Warrior already? It can't be! Not even if he

had been training at the Drakehead non-stop for days!’ Lu Qianhuan thought to himself as he covered tens of miles in mere seconds. ‘Either way, I will not let him live!’

Chapter 190 - Blood Shadow Stance

While Lu Qianhuan was running towards Ye Wei, his brother Lu Qianying was doing all he could to run away from Ye Wei.

“Fatty, I know you were involved in pressuring my family these few days. Now, it’s time for you to pay!” At the speed of a falling meteor, Ye Wei caught up with the chubby elder.

Lu Qianying could hear Ye Wei’s voice getting closer and louder. He turned around and found out the young Runemaster was closer than than he expected.

‘High-level Myst stance, Slideflash!’ Lu Qianying’s Qi was not completely stable as he was still recovering from his internal injuries. There was a second delay between his channeled his energy and the speed enhancing stance actually activating, two clouds of flickering runes appeared underneath his feet.

“Swoosh!”

Lu Qianying accelerated to his top speed in matter of seconds, but there was no grace to his nimbleness, he was running like a panicking rabbit. He had disgracefully even left behind his own men so that he could escape quicker.

Lu Qianying was not happy being the hunted. His face was twisted, and he gritted his teeth while running and leaping.

Ye Wei’s eyes lit up. His will-force rapidly spread and expanded. It picked up Lu Qianying’s Qi presence from twenty miles away.

“Elder Qianying is done!” The Lu’s condensed prime Warriors became pale, overwhelmed by fear.

“Quickly! Back to base!”

“Go! What are we doing standing here?”

Their leader had left them behind, and the young Lu cultivators were all terrified; they dispersed and escaped to different directions.

“Pfft!” Ye Wei could sense every single one of the Lu’s movement. He casually swiped his hand backwards; his Qi swords followed each of the escapees. Concurrently, he made a snap decision to tear a scroll, which activated a stance to speed up his chase.

“Plop!”

As Ye Wei disappeared into the mountain range, his Qi swords landed on all his targets, ending many lives simultaneously.

“Argh...”

The echoing screams and cries filled the woods as the dead bodies fell.

“Lu Qianying, you won’t get away!” Ye Wei’s aggressive voice was the only sound Lu Qianying could hear.

The elder was not pulling ahead in any way, but Ye Wei could not quite catch up. Every time Ye Wei was getting close, the returned prime Warrior would use a speed boosting stance to avoid being caught.

If Ye Wei could not find a way to break the cycle, he would never catch up with Lu Qianying.

Under the third Supernova Evolution’s effect, Ye Wei’s will-force density and Qi quality radically increased; however, the only speed-enhancing stance he knew was Starblink Steps. The high-level Spirit stance was not converting Ye Wei’s two-star Returned prime level strength to speed efficiently.

“I have to pay the Glacial Temple a visit after things calm down because this is not close to giving me the speed I want.” Ye Wei grumbled to himself, frowning and planning while running.

Ye Wei had gain access to the runic chamber not long after his first visit to the Glacial temple. It contained all the rare runes the Glacial Emperor collected throughout his cultivation career, which was thirteen thousand six hundred specialized runes.

Ye Wei had thought about refining the stance in his spare time, but he always decided against it. Due to the fact, he wanted it to be his main project; he refused to develop the first stance he created in a mediocre manner.

Throughout the three years of training, Ye Wei was drained of energy nearly every day. He had actually only had the chance to visit the runic chamber less than ten times because he simply did not have the Qi to activate the jade trinket teleporter to get to the Glacial temple during any free time left over, which was not much anyway.

In terms of stance grade, Lu Qianying had the advantage; but with the Supernova stance, Ye Wei had the cultivation advantage. Ye Wei calculated that it should be possible that Lu Qianying runs out of steam before his own amplification stance runs out if he pressured the elder hard enough.

“Swoosh! Swoosh!”

With just a few steps Ye Wei and Lu Qianying overpassed, acres of lands were destroyed. The wilderness of the North Hill Bay was anything but peaceful. The gentle critters were panicking in their own home, crying and howling to warn the others.

“Brother! I need you right now!” Lu Qianying’s eyes turned red. Blood dripped from the corner of his paled jawline as he desperately screamed. The chubby man was running low on both Qi and will-force. It was becoming increasingly difficult for him to ignore his injuries and push himself quicker.

Nervous for his brother’s life, Lu Qianhuan was fast. Nevertheless, his speed did not enclose the distance between North Hill Bay and the city any closer.

“Lu Qianying, stop wasting your time. Accept your fate. I will not let you live through today!” Ye Wei’s aggressive voice thundered.

The elder’s body was shakened by the loud noise; the Qi flow in his body was destabilizing rapidly.

“Shit!” Lu Qianying screamed as he felt a spike of pain in his chest. Using the speed enhancing stances had worsened his internal injuries. His Qi was out of his control when he tried to use yet another stance to get away. He had slowed down by half just seconds after his stance stopped working.

Ye Wei sense Lu Qianying’s deceleration. He grunted and activated the Starblink Steps, covering a mile in the blink of an eye. He could now see the elder’s back.

“What did I say? You won’t get away!” Ye Wei narrowed his eyes. His fingers released runes. They quickly condensed and became thirty-six Qi swords. The swords merged into one, becoming a wide sword, crushing towards Lu Qianying.

“Brother! Save me!” Lu Qianying screamed desperately. He could feel the sharp Qi approaching. He desperately wished to dodge, but he did not have the energy to do so. This time he was completely out of solutions.

Lu Qianying was too injured to use any stances. Even if he could, he would be no match to Ye Wei’s Peerless Qi swords at his best.

“Little bastard! Stop now or else! If you kill my brother, I will make sure myself that all the Ye’s suffer a painful death! I will even kill the pets and plants at your family mansion!” Lu Qianhuan’s furious voice reached Ye Wei’s ears from twenty miles away.

“Great, he would die in peace now he heard your voice.” Ye Wei smiled sadistically and retorted. He narrowed his eyes and kept injecting Qi into his strike.

Ye Wei swung his arm downwards. It was too late for him to change the course of his Qi sword, so he decided to quickly make the kill in order to move on to dealing with the approaching three-star returned prime Warrior.

“Avenge me!” Lu Qianying’s voice faded while his figure disappeared in the pillar of runic light. His scream lasted less than a second; all was quiet as he was shredded to pieces.

Ye Wei dove into the light beam where Lu Qianying disappeared into. He emerged with a blood soaked interspatial bag in his hand. He sure was not going to miss out on looting an elder of a powerful family.

Lu Qianhuan's face contorted into a beast-like agony; his muscles twitched as he felt his brother's Qi presence vanished.

"You and your family will pay for what happened today!" Lu Qianhuan growled viciously while flicking his fingers repeatedly, sniping Ye Wei with bolts of golden Qi from miles away.

'Blood Shadow Stance!' Lu Qianhuan squirted blood from all over his skin. The dark droplets dispersed and heated up. All his blood became a thick red mist.

Dwelling in his own anger, the skinny elder did not think twice before trading his blood for energy. He activated the incomplete Earth stance.

"Swoosh!"

The skinny figure turned into a red mist, doubling his original speed. Time itself lengthened in the point of continuum where Lu Qianhuan passed. When he reappeared in his human form, he was already in front of Ye Wei.

"I will make you squeal!" Lu Qianying muttered behind a thin mist of red, he changed the texture of his Qi and detonated the primal energy. The entire bay area shook from the sudden burst.

Ye Wei was forced to back off for half a mile to avoid the epicenter; he looking concerned. He did not expect to have to fight a three-star returned prime Warrior when he woke up this morning. He grunted and shrugged, empowered his body with Qi to let the energy storm slide off his skin.

'I can't run from this man. This fight will be all or nothing!' Ye Wei thought to himself. His gaze intensified.

Thirty-six Qi swords merged into one. It flew from Ye Wei's hand towards the skinny elder. The shrill noise of the strike muffled by the explosion just moments before the initiation.

Lu Qianhuan looked at his young opponent with ferocity; he was infuriated, but strangely, at the same time, he admired Ye Wei's strength. 'Two-star returned prime level, even Lu Fan can't compare to this kid in front of me.'

"Nonetheless, it doesn't meant I will let you live!" The elder recognized Ye Wei not only as his brother's murderer, but also as a threat to the Lu's supremacy in Qing state. His stare became as cold as a glacier.

The wrinkled hands maneuvered in the air. The hand seals turned into a blur, Lu Qianhuan fired a ground shaking energy bolt at Ye Wei's Qi sword. 'High-level Myst stance, Thunderbird Seal!'

His golden Qi condensed and turned silver by the specialized runes on his hands. The bolt became alive and split into hundreds of silver-winged buzzards, which covered the sky and dove straight to Ye Wei.

Chapter 191 - Seventh Selenic Stance

The Thunderbird Seal was one of the nine most powerful stances the Lu's possessed. The Myst stance consisted exclusively of specialized runes.

Although to activate the stance only required as much energy to activate any other ordinary Myst stance, the rare specialized runes that composed it translated the energy more efficiently, making it as powerful as an Earth stance.

Lu Qianhuan had no desire to hold back; his brother's death confirmed Ye Wei's extraordinary talent. *He did not want to leave anything to chance, tried to make the kill as quick as he could and get out of the fight uninjured.*

All of Lu Qianhuan's opponents who saw this stance, including a three-star returned prime Warrior, died from it. The elder left very little to chance, and this was why he was completely ruthless--no chances taken, no hope left.

"Die!" The hoarse voice sounded out like a warhorn. A large bird flew up through the clouds and spread its wings as the the elder screamed the word.

"Crack! Crack!"

The thunderbird vigorously flapped its wings, the fanning motion of its wings created a golden gust. Ye Wei's Qi sword was instantly crushed and scattered. Unexpected by even Lu Qianhuan, Ye Wei's sword turned against him because of the raging current.

"Crack! Crack!"

Ye Wei was stunned and almost paralyzed by the sudden burst of energy; under the pressure of the thunderbird, he stood staring while his bones creaked.

“I expected less from you considering how weak your brother was!” Blood gushed out of Ye Wei’s mouth. His pale face wore an aggressive look, though.

“Insolent child!” Lu Qianhuan’s cold eyes bore into Ye Wei. He lifted his hand and pointed his right index finger at him.

“Flop!”

The thunderbird’s eyes widened. Its intense gaze pointed straight at Ye Wei. Its shrill caw sent shivers down his spine.

While Ye Wei was still immobilized by the gust of energy, bolts of lightning came out of the bird’s eyes and rained down upon Ye Wei, striking him in a quick succession.

The pressure Ye Wei endured was great enough to crush his entire body. The only thing stopping it from doing so was the support from the runes on his bones. His veins constricted, and the drop of Supreme blood expanded against the pressure.

The expanding energy circulated throughout his body, a subtle but dense energy held Ye Wei’s body together.

The power of the Supreme blood grew within him. In a matter of seconds, Ye Wei was strong enough to spring back up on his feet. He bent his knees and gathered strength, briefly aimed at the thunderbird and launched himself up into the sky.

“What the hell is going on with this kid?” Lu Qianhuan exclaimed. He was dumbfounded to see Ye Wei’s ability to strike back, but he also mocked Ye Wei at such a poor decision. “Shouldn’t you be trying to run?”

Ye Wei saw the true, unreserved power of Lu Qianhuan. The specialized runes in the elder’s stance was a rare sight. Lu Qianhuan’s power inspired Ye Wei and provided him the conceptual base structure of the seventh Selenic stance.

Although Ye Wei had been spending as much time cultivating as he did trying to figure out the seventh Selenic stance, he was not able to create an effective energy flow in the given runes.

Before Ye Wei's eyes was a well calibrated specialized Myst stance, he was not going to let the chance slip. He closed his eyes to feel the exact kind of flow he had been trying to create for the past few days.

‘Selenic Armor.’

‘Triple Selenic Punch.’

‘Searing Selenic Palm.’

‘Selenic Descend.’

‘Selenic Ironbark Seal.’

‘Selenic Triple-Primal Sword.’

Ye Wei activated the Falling Star form and began to steal Qi from the very stance that Lu Qianhuan wanted to take his life with. Using the stolen energy, he quickly drew all the runes to the first six Selenic stances; he rearranged the sequence to the order he had in his head all in a matter of minutes.

“The seventh, Selenic Reveal!” He mumbled as he put together the six stances’ essence. The specialized rune sequence rattled and transformed into a mile tall Selenic beast figure.

On top of the beast’s head were three long and sharp horns. The runic patterns on its scales constantly flowed and transformed. The beast’s image gave Ye Wei flashbacks of his visit to Bloodmist Valley; he smiled and charged forward the skinny elder.

“Roar!” The Selenic beast’s cold gaze set onto the thunderbird. Its jaws wide open, and its nose pointed right at the thunderbird. The provocative sound seemed to have a mockery undertone.

The Selenic beast crouched then leaped. With a mysterious aura and momentum, the beast lunged at the bird. It froze time and space on its path. The lightning bolts were held still in the air.

“Swoosh!” After another roar, all three horns on its head grew in length. They glowed ghastly green; each of them became a sword that could cut the sky in halves.

Within seconds the Selenic beast's nose was touching the bird's torso. The three horns impaled into the core of Lu Qianhuan's strongest stance. A destructive shock wave and rumble quickly spread throughout the sky.

The powerful thunderbird was torn apart with ease, but the Selenic beast wanted more bloodshed. It decisively turned its head around and stared at Lu Qianhuan. The ghoulish beast then aimed its claws at the elder's head. The runic Selenic beast was not only as large as a real one, it was also as smart as one.

"What stance is this!?" Lu Qianhuan was intimidated by the gigantic runic Selenic beast. His calm was quickly replaced by fear; his breathing quickened and the golden ball of energy in his dantian shook uncontrollably, making the Qi flow in his body extremely unstable.

"I am not going to let you live!" Lu Qianhuan scream, and he exhaled deeply. The elder tried to suppress the raging Qi in his body. He desired to utterly destroy Ye Wei, which shown in his facial expression. a Qi disturbance no weaker than the thunderbird stance's quickly developed as he successfully tamed the energy, transformed the surge into a rune sequence.

Lu Qianhuan ignored the high odds of being injured by the recoiling energy. He activated the peak-low level Earth stance that he had yet gain full control over. He felt that the danger of being consumed by his own Earth stance was worth the risk. He would certainly die if he did not retaliate against the wrath of Ye Wei's seventh Selenic stance

'Sun-shattering Lightning Stance!' Lu Qianhuan grunted. His hair rose and flew behind his head; his robe fluttered to the surge of energy his Earth stance emitted.

The Lu elder's Qi immediately condensed into a ball of energy in the sky. The ball released its power in the shape and speed of a large lightning bolt and shot at the large Selenic beast.

"Bang!"

The entire bay area shook as the bolt impacted against the beast. The crash of Qi brewed collided and erupted in the sky, and the lightning bolt

became dimmer as it broke apart the runes that made up the Selenic beast.

Ye Wei could feel the pressure from behind the beast. The energy flow in his body was disrupted by the imposing strike. He grew nervous as the lightning bolt advanced and penetrated the runic beast's torso.

The seventh Selenic stance took a toll on Ye Wei's will-force and Qi reserve; the third Supernova Evolution's amplifying effects beginning to fade.

Ye Wei came to the realization that Lu Qianhuan's gamble was paying off. The three-star returned prime Warrior was stronger than himself. He had to decide now whether he should try to counter or he should run.

'The seventh Selenic stance will be stronger when I have time to work on it. I should not fight an unsure battle.' The young Runemaster thought to himself. He placed his hand onto the selenic beast, and he absorbed as much energy as he could. He then used that energy and turned himself into a globe of runic light, which blinked and flashed backwards.

"Bang" not only did Ye Wei successfully escaped, he tempered the residual energy into small dense shapes. They all fired at once and caught the skinny elder off-guard.

"Damn it! You sneaky little bastard!" Lu Qianhuan was hit from all directions. He screamed as blood gushed out from his mouth. He suffered from not only the recoiling force of his own stance but Ye Wei's surprise as well.

The skinny elder stopped and adjusted his Qi flow. With the momentum of the lightning bolt behind him, he rapidly leaped towards Ye Wei's direction. He distributed his energy to nourish the injured parts of his body.

Ye Wei could feel the elder catching up. He closed his eyes and ran the Falling Star form at its full speed. A constellation-like runic array projected into the air from inside his Sentient, and it became a light clone.

The clone tackled the chaser and stopped the elder as Ye Wei kept moving forward at incredible speed, finally disappearing into the woods.

“What the hell is this?!” Lu Qianhuan was forced into a close-combat fist fight with the light clone. He could not ignore any of the clone’s strikes no matter how much he wanted to. Each punch and kick was precisely aimed at his body’s weak spots and strong enough to knock him out.

Lu Qianhuan had not had a fist fight since decades ago. By the time he neutralized the light clone with his rusty moves, Ye Wei was already miles away and nowhere to be seen.

Deep inside the woods, Ye Wei landed on a flat land covered by the tree’s shade. He felt safe enough to sit down. He adjusted his breathing and regulated the Qi flow in his meridians.

With closed eyes, Ye Wei felt the drop of Supreme blood in his vein. He located it close to his waist and tried to manipulate the energy within with his will-force.

With the aid of the Falling Star form and the vast energy in his blood, he refilled in dantian with Qi. His will-force began to also recover. After replaying the seventh Selenic stance in his mind a few times, he grabbed the runic badge from his inside pocket.

“Master, are you there?” Ye Wei spoke into the badge and waited for a replay.

“Wei! Where are you!?” Master Yi’s nervous voice sounded after the badge rattled. “You have to be careful, I heard the Lu’s found you, is this true?”

“They did, but I am fine. I killed Lu Qianying, but his brother is still on the loose, please take care of the Ye’s master! The Mansion might be his next target! Can you maybe take them out of town to somewhere safe?” Ye Wei replied in a desperate and solemn tone.

“You killed who?” Master Yi’s voice broke, “how did you manage to take care of a returned prime Warrior?!”

“Not now master, please. I promise I will explain everything to you when all of this get settled!” said Ye Wei.

“It should be fine. I contacted one of my old friends from the union. He is a returned prime Warrior. Lu Qianhuan won’t be able to do much to us for now. I will look for the suitable place for your family to hideout before the Lu’s send any reinforcement.”

“Thank you master!” Ye Wei felt relieved, smiled and said.

“Please take care of yourself. I will keep you updated!” Master Yi said in a light tone, glad that his apprentice was still alive.

‘Pu Yuan will be able to help me with the Selenic stance!’ After ending the conversation, Ye Wei took out a jade trinket and started channeling his Qi.

A figure appeared and grabbed Ye Wei’s shoulder and stopped the teleportation.

“Who are you!?” Ye Wei panicked. He looked to his left to see a wrinkled hand on his shoulder.

Chapter 192 - Helian

The hand belonged to an elderly man dressed in a purple robe. He was three steps away from Ye Wei. His hair was shoulder-length; his white beard was as long as his arm. The skinny old man greeted Ye Wei with a friendly smile and a nod.

Just like Ye Wei, the old man had no Qi presence. His grip was firm, but his figure seemed weightless.

Ye Wei's heart sank, and his pupils dilated, 'this is madness!' Although clueless about the old man's cultivation level, everything he could see indicated that the bearded man would have killed him without even Ye Wei knowing of it. If that was his intention all along.

'He is stronger than even Master Yi!'

"Excuse my forwardness, but may I ask who you are?" Ye Wei rightfully assumed the old man was friendly. The old man solemnly kneeled down and spoke.

"Hahaha! I like your humbleness, Ye Wei." The old man stroked his beard and said, "I am Helian Jieyuan. I have been watching you since you dove down into that pond and found the Drakehead. I am impressed by how quick you learned to control the Supreme blood in your veins!"

"Huh!?" Ye Wei startled. He couldn't believe what he just heard. 'Sir, do you happen to be related to Green Moon City's Ye family?!'

Judging by how well the old man's stealthiness and knowledge was, Ye Wei knew he was standing next to a man stronger than any wild beast or demon he had encountered in the wilderness of North Barren Mountain so far.

Helian Jieyuan's curious gaze fell upon the jade trinket in Ye Wei's hand. Seeing him trying to teleport was the reason why he decided reveal himself. "So you are *it* ! You live on the feisty side but you seem to live by

a principal! Not bad!”

By now Ye Wei had understood that if the old man stood in front of him, he was probably related to the Glacial Emperor, ‘if the old man wanted me dead, I would already be dead.’

“Sir, could I help you with anything?” Ye Wei bowed.

“I am from one of the royal families if you have not yet worked that out. We are currently recruiting cultivators from all across the dynasty. The officials are more interested in fighting each other than eradicating wild beasts and demons nowadays. Thus, we’ve decided to take the matter into our own hands.” Helian Jieyuan’s smile never faded. His look was as soft as his voice.

“Royal?” Ye Wei murmured to himself, feeling nostalgic as he thought about his old crush who was also from one of the three families.

“You heard right. With your level of talent, I wouldn’t be surprised if you get recruited by any one of the three royal families. We might not be as influential, but I can promise you we treat our cultivators better than the other two families” Helian Jieyuan said with pride. “What I want in return, is your permission for me to use the Drakehead. I meant to ask your patriarch but decided against it as the information might go public. I’d much rather have it peaceful as it is now.”

“I know for a fact that among the living no more than three people know about the Drakehead’s location,” the old man continued, “I have been training here for more than ten years, and I still need a few more years until I will be able to breakthrough my current cultivation level.”

“In truth, I would really like you to keep this place a secret. In return, I will watch over the underwater palace!” Helian Jieyuan gravely said. His look suddenly intensified. “I would never go there out of respect for valuables left in the palace. They are treasures that should only be inherited by whom who has the Ye’s blood flowing in their veins!”

Ye Wei widened his eyes again; he was surprised by this great offer. He couldn’t think of any downsides at all.

“Okay you got me, who am I lying to?” The old man chuckled and said, “I will watch over your family even if you don’t join us. For old time’s sake.”

After having calmed down, Ye Wei reasoned with himself. First he was scared; then he was happy and relieved. ‘A person like him has no reason to lie!’

“We would like you to join us; we don't have many rules for non familial members. Of course, call of duty must be answered. In return, we will provide members with resources and protection.” Helian Jieyuan was not trying to lure Ye Wei into becoming a member. He just wanted to show the real world to the Glacial Emperor’s inheritor.

“This will get me closer to her.” Ye Wei mumbled. His mind wandered, and his eyes glowed bright. It had been his dream to get out of Green Moon City, and when he became strong enough to visit the capital since the day Li Ziyang left him.

Ye Wei did not need to think for long. He knelt down and bowed, “thank you for giving me the chance. I would like to join the Helian family!”

“Haha! Good! That’s great news!” The old man’s laugh was playful. It sounded as if it came from someone half his age, “with the talent you have, you will see greatness in a few years and maybe even achieve it if you cultivate hard! One more thing, you will be up for a review that decides if you are qualified enough to gain the privileges of a familial member.”

“I will not let you down!” Ye Wei nodded.

“I don’t have the most catchy name, but I need you to remember it. Within two years, when you feel comfortable, you should head to our palace at the capital. Show the guards this sigil plate and tell them I sent you there.” The old man kept babbling.

Ye Wei suddenly felt a heavy weight on his hand. A piece of metal appeared in the middle of his palm out of nowhere. He quickly grabbed onto the cold object.

“Thank you for looking after us!” Ye Wei made a greeting hand gesture and said.

“Don’t mention it. I will send word back home. The Lu’s are already in big trouble for harassing a Seven New Rune. Now that you are associated with us, I have hundreds of ways to make them pay for the deeds they’ve done. I will make sure that nobody touches the Ye’s.” Helian Jieyuan said with great authority.

‘He is not only the strongest cultivator I’ve ever met he is definitely one of the more selfless ones too.’ Ye Wei thought to himself, realizing the old man was looking at the bigger picture and thinking of the mankind. ‘This is personal but not completely personal. The more talent I show, the more important the Ye family would be to him.’

“Sir, about a week ago I encountered an alliance of demons and wild beasts not far from here. They were fighting the Huyan’s. Were they all looking for the Drakehead as well?” Ye Wei asked concernedly.

“Not sure, but they won’t be able to beat me even if they are to join forces! Haha!” Helian Jieyuan smiled at Ye Wei. “Kid, the sigil is a runic array. You can contact me with it! But you need to figure out how yourself!” The old man’s figure faded into the background right after he said the last word.

When Ye Wei had digested what he just heard, the mysterious royal had already disappeared. There was no trace of the two meeting each other apart from the sigil plate in Ye Wei’s palm.

“One less thing to worry about.” Ye Wei muttered to himself, “I am not going to rely on him though. I have to do what I can such as get more combat experience, so I will become stronger!” Ye Wei knew that Helian Jieyuan would be watching him, excited about the possibility of experimenting more now he had a seemingly reliable safety net.

Ye Wei took a few deep breathes and injected his Qi into the jade trinket; he resumed what he was doing before the strange encounter.

The jade trinket lit up. Sequences of runes burst out and circulated around Ye Wei while he injected more Qi into it. He felt a little nauseous

as he emptied his dantian.

“Swoosh!” A crisp noise briefly sounded. Ye Wei had disappeared into the wormhole created by the runic array.

Lu Qianhuan was oblivious, struggling to recuperate. He held a scroll in each of his hand in case if he ran into Ye Wei again. “You little bastard, I will find you and kill you even if that means I have to turn this area upside down.” He exclaimed as he paced frustratedly around.

The Glacial Temple.

“Mister Pu! It’s been awhile!” Ye Wei waved at the large spectral figure in the center of the great hall.

“Seven-star condensed prime level!?” Pu Yuan turned to Ye Wei, surprised, “it’s only been three months since I last saw you! What the hell happened to you since then?”

The Glacial Emperor’s previous servant had an exceptional standard; but even so, he did not foresee Ye Wei’s swift cultivation improvement.

“It’s a long long story!” Ye Wei laughed and shook his head. He was open to talk about his many near death experiences, but he had something else in mind. “Mister, I have recently learned the Selenic Reveal, and I wish to polish it in the runic chamber. Do you have any tips for me?”

Ye Wei wished to deal with the Lu’s publically to clean his family’s reputation.

“The Seventh... Well done!” Pu Yuan could see a slight bitterness in Ye Wei’s smile. Deep down he could guess the young Runemaster had learned combat knowledge the hard way. He smiled and continued, “the seven stances were created by my master. There are little space for improvement; however, it is possible merge the seven stances into one.”

“Seven into one? That is genius! So these seven stances are only puzzle pieces!” Ye Wei’s heart fell. Earlier on when he used the seven stances to

fight Lu Qianhuan, he could feel a strange connection between the seven stances. ‘I have been wondering why the creator of this realm and temple was only capable of composing low grade stances.

“That’s just what master did. If you are inspired by anything inside the chamber, you should follow your heart!” Pu Yuan nodded, recognizing Ye Wei’s capabilities. “Follow me!”

Ye Wei kept up with the guardian. He headed towards one of the biggest collection of runes in the dynasty.

“Cultivation is not easy. You will face dangerous people and things. Relax yourself as much as you can and avoid getting stressed. I should have told you this earlier, but if you are going through a hard time, seek help from the Helian’s. Their patriarch studied under my master.” Pu Yuan said calmly. He was proud of what Ye Wei accomplished but also worried for his safety.

“I know.” Ye Wei smiled, amused that his theory of Helian Jieyuan was not too far off.

“Here you go!” Pu Yuan opened the gate to the runic chamber and patted Ye Wei’s back with his gigantic finger.”

Chapter 193 - Speed of light

“Thank you!” Ye Wei nodded, bowed, and stepped into a museum of priceless collection.

The young master of the temple paused baffled by everything around him, it was not his first time entering the runic chamber, however he couldn't stop looking at the etchings on the mahogany doors.

“These runes are... ‘ Having participated at in the Runemaster Union entrance exam deeply changed his perspective on runes, ever since he spent three days working with them and finally created his own stance, he learned to appreciate the beauty of runes.

It was not until today that Ye Wei appreciate he was looking at decades of hard work and research, that each curve and straight line of the runes meant something.

Specialized runes represented power. Runemasters and even grand-Runemasters have been known to involve themselves in violent feuds, both on the battlefield and out, just to acquire one of these rare runes. The value of the runic chamber's content exceeded by far the most powerful sky stance in the Runemaster Union's inventory.

“Squeak!”

Ye Wei inhaled deeply and pushed the heavy doors. The dark hall lit up immediately after the mahogany flaps sealed the runic chamber's entrance.

The young Runemaster walked into a starry night, the twinkles were the only light source in the otherwise empty hall. The specialized runes were scattered, loosely filling the hall. They all appeared to be fading but the shine was solid.

“Where do I even start?” Ye Wei muttered, he closed his eyes and felt the energy of each of the runes in the air. Some of them had cores hotter

than magma, some of them were as cold as glacier, some raging like storm, some stable and sturdy like rocks; or too sharp to touch and others soft enough to use as a pillow.

Ye Wei sat himself down, thinking of nothing but the Starblink Steps. He dictated the rune sequence that composed the stance in his mind, took it apart and tried to identify where he could insert any of the thirteen thousand six hundred runes to improve it.

Having used the stance in real combat, Ye Wei gained a better understanding of how primal energy was converted to speed when he created the stance. After a few minutes of experimenting, he was able to find a few more stable runic structures that were suitable for the initial fractions.

After consolidating the initial fractions, Ye Wei felt a need to widen the sequence due to the increased Qi flow within the sequence.

With his exceptional will-force, Ye Wei identified a few more ductile runes which would make it possible for the stance to run at a high speed even when Qi input is lower than optimal.

The sequence was becoming complete as Ye Wei infused more specialized runes into it, the flow was becoming smoother and faster.

After four hours of continuous hard work, Ye Wei had found optimal position in the sequence for all the runes he added to the sequence. A thundering rumble sounded as he put the twelfth rune in place, and Ye Wei was suddenly consumed by a huge pillar of cosmic energy.

‘This is...’ Ye Wei opened his eyes, looked at the sequence in front of him and smiled, satisfied with his modifications, “it’s now a low-level Myst stance!”

Ye Wei had many previous experience with cosmic energy, he knew better than to waste some of the purest energy he could have access to. He activated the Falling Star form as fast as he could and immediately processed the raging energy that entered his body.

The silver ball of energy in Ye Wei’s dantian expanded as the result of

the cosmic surge, the eighth crack appeared. It was not a surprise to him as he was already a peak seven-star condensed prime Warrior before consuming the cosmic force.

The pillar of light eventually faded, Supreme Falling Star form was running fast and smooth, it took less than an hour for Ye Wei to process the wild energy.

“This is good, but not enough, Starblink Steps needs to be a forbidden high-level Myst stance...” Ye Wei muttered to himself, he figured out that if he would be fighting returned prime Warriors, he still needed more speed.

Ye Wei calmed himself down, continuously attempted to fit runes into the Starblink Steps Sequence it took him half a day to infused twenty-four extra specialized runes, and by the end of the session his stance became a mid-level Myst stance.

After receiving cosmic energy again, Ye Wei diluted and absorbed all of it as quickly as he could. Even though the surge was not powerful enough to push Ye Wei to another breakthrough, it greatly improved the capacity of his meridians.

“I can’t think of a better place to refine stances!” Ye Wei said to himself.

Encouraged by the positive result, Ye Wei continued researching on the runes after a short rest, in hopes that he would be able to pick out ones that are useful for improving any of his stances.

The young Runemaster sat still in the middle of the runic hall, the Qi in his body was calmly pulsing, completely in sync with the runes around him. He became a part of his surrounding.

The runes in the hall were attracted to Ye Wei, all of them seemed to be shining towards him, highlighting him in the rather dimmed enclosed space.

The more specialized runic structures Ye Wei learned, the more he gained respect for the Glacial Emperor. It seemed to him that the more he discovered, the more mysterious the strongest cultivator of his time

had become.

Ye Wei was starting to understand how the Supreme Falling Star form was able to buffer primal energy more efficiently than other formulas he learned, and he was even beginning to imagine how some of the stance in the hall could be related to how the Sage was able to create a stance to harvest power from belief.

‘I will master all these runes one day! And I will make a name for myself!’ Ye Wei thought to himself as he jumped up into the air, he reached his arm out and grabbed an energetic spark.

“Number eighty-one! This should be the final piece!” Ye Wei opened his eyes, looked at the rune in his hand constantly shifting its shape with a smile on his face.

“Swoosh!” He drew the runes sequence to the Starblink Steps with his right hand while holding the eighty-first extra rune in his left.

“Get in there!” His left arm swiped outwards, shot the rune into the sequence he just drew. The rune was constantly moving, whizzing through air looking for the most suitable position to insert itself under Ye Wei’s guidance.

Ye Wei’s tired eyes lit up, after an hour of putting runes together and taking them apart, his will-force identified the weakest point in the sequence.

All the runes in the newly refined stance brightened simultaneously and lit up the hall.

A surge of Qi flowed through the rune sequence, a long ribbon of glowing star-like energy sparks filled up the runic chamber, it grew into a belt that briefly resembled the milky way.

Triggered by Starblink Steps’ upgrade, another pillar of cosmic energy descended from the heavens, engulfing Ye Wei entirely.

‘It’s technically only a high-level Myst stance but the specialized runes should give it an edge, its effect should be comparable to a low-level Earth stance!’ Ye Wei thought with a slightly twisted, euphoric smile on

his face. He knew that he would be able to compete with Lu Qianhuan, or maybe even other returned prime Warriors if the Lu's decided to send them to Green Moon City.

"It's a shame I will need a lot more Qi in order to push for nine-star condensed prime level." Ye Wei shook his head, "I should work on my Sentient, I've improved so quickly it has become one of my weaker sides from being the strongest."

For a sixteen-year-old, eight-star condensed prime level is naturally unreachable, although Ye Wei was the one of the nation's best young cultivators, the same drive that motivated him was also frustrating him.

'The Selenic Reveal should be the next to be refined...'

"Offensively I have Selenic Reveal; Starblink Steps for speed, and with the light clone as my safety line, I should be able to deal with whatever the Lu's are going to throw towards my direction!" Ye Wei muttered to himself, planning to turn a crisis into a self-improvement exercise.

"Speaking of which, I need to work on the clone too." Ye Wei frowned, not satisfied by how little impact the technique made in his last fight.

'Only if the clone had the power of a two-star returned prime Warrior...'
He thought to himself as he stood up and walked towards the exit of the chamber, 'Maybe I should ask Pu Yuan to see if he had any more tips and advices.'

Ye Wei rushed back into the main hall and spoke with the temple's guardian about his recent encounters.

"Light clone!?" Pu Yuan's curiosity made him look like a child again. "You have to show me it before I can help you with improving it!"

Ye Wei channeled his will-force, a bolt of starlight shot out of his forehead, became a clone and had taken the shape of its owner within the blink of an eye.

"Your forefather is a genius!" Pu Yuan looked at the light clone in awe, he appeared calm but was just too shocked to show emotion. He once was the Glacial Emperor's follower, and even he had never seen a technique

quite like Ye Wei's light clone, he could not fully understand how the clone seemed to have its own meridians and Qi flow. "This is the perfect combination of a stance and a formula!"

"So, do you think you can help me improve the stance?" Ye Wei was impatient and needed an answer.

"I am not sure, kid, but this is not just any clone technique, it seemed to be an enhanced version of your mirrored self." Pu Yuan answered in an uncertain tone, "Like all other stances, it should become stronger as your cultivation becomes higher."

"That's what I've discovered, it is stronger than it was before my breakthrough just a couple hours ago." Ye Wei became more frustrated, "My question is, do you think there are other ways the technique can be improved?"

"It is still too soon to judge. Just be patient, you will see soon!" Pu Yuan smiled, patted Ye Wei's shoulder, "For now you should just focus on breaking through to the returned prime level."

"Runes and Qi don't feel pain, even if your light clone only has the power of a one-star returned prime Warrior, it will be able to fight two and even three-star returned prime Warriors as you might already have realized." Pu Yuan continued, "use it to aid yourself escaping for now, worry about how to fight alongside it when it becomes stronger!"

Chapter 194 - Help

After considering Pu Yuan's words for a minute, Ye Wei realized that if it wasn't for his light clones he wouldn't even had the chance to escape Lu Qianhuan, a three-star returned prime Warrior's assault, in one piece.

"I get you, I am not ungrateful! However I am not satisfied with it, I will have to fight more returned prime Warriors soon and I will be needing the clone to fight, not to escape." Ye Wei shook his head and sighed.

"If the clone has its separate Qi flow, then it is more or less a Qi puppet." Pu Yuan laughed and looked back at Ye Wei comedically. "Well I didn't create the stance so I am not sure how it works exactly, but I do know someone who is familiar with clones and puppets."

Ye Wei nodded, having fought stone giants in the Bloodmist Labyrinth, he knew from the back of his mind that the Glacial Emperor was able to remotely controlling structures with Qi.

"Blood Devourer crystals, they were developed by my master to power his automatic defensive system if you did not already know. You can try to make your clone absorb the crystals' energy." Pu Yuan swiped his arm, a small pile of transparent red crystals appeared in the middle of the hall.

"Do it slowly, you know about the side effects of the energy these stones carries." Pu Yuan pointed at the delicate glowing stones.

"Thank you for the advice!" The young Runemaster said gratefully as he looked at the pile.

'If the clone can become a little stronger, I will be able to crush Lu Qianhuan at his best with the Selenic stances and my Supernova stance!' Protected by one of the royal families, Ye Wei was going to use it to his advantage and redeem his family's reputation in Green Moon City.

“This is not much more than an educated guess, you have to try it to confirm if it works!” Pu Yuan let go of Ye Wei’s shoulder, “That’s all I have to say, I will be looking after you if anything should go wrong.”

“Okay!” Ye Wei briefly replied as he activated his light clone. He was experienced with absorbing energy with crystals and didn’t take Pu Yuan’s advice too seriously.

“Crack!” The light clone grabbed one of the crystals and crushed it. The compressed energy was immediately released as it turned into dust, surging into the clone's meridians.

As the clone tried to incorporate the crystal’s energy into its own Qi flow, Ye Wei’s consciousness was getting disrupted by an aggressive killing intent.

“I have learned how to deal with this years ago!” Ye Wei muttered, he was completely calm when he called upon the mystic mount’s energy in his Sentient, which purified the aggression.

Now in a nourishing soothened state, crystal’s energy was doing more good than harm, slightly strengthening Ye Wei’s Sentient.

“Zoom!”

When Ye Wei successfully tamed the aggression, his light clone accepted the Qi.

“You are right! I can improve my clone’s strength by using the crystal!” Ye Wei stood up excitedly and exclaimed at Pu Yuan.

‘Keep absorbing!’ He controlled his clone to crush more and more crystals. He was not at all worried about being consumed by aggressive primal energy, within five hours, Ye Wei had upgraded his clone to two-star returned prime level.

“Pu Yuan, do we have more?” Ye Wei said, looking at the piles of dust where the crystals were placed.

“Those are valuable treasures to many! You can’t even buy them from the Runemaster Union! No, I do not have more of those!” Pu Yuan said,

annoyed. He blew onto his beard, stared at Ye Wei and thought, ‘I am not going to let him take shortcuts like this! Especially when it comes to using Blood Devourer crystal!’

“Oh, what a shame.” Ye Wei’s lips moved to one side, there was a cold flash in his eyes. “To be honest, it should be fine, a two-star returned prime level clone should be able to draw or even knock out someone like Lu Qianhuan...”

“Mister Pu, thanks for your help. I should be going now!” Ye Wei thought about the awkward situation he put his family in, getting desperate to return home.

Ye Wei activated the teleportation array again as he waved Pu Yuan goodbye, his smile slowly faded into nothing as his figure disappeared in front of the temple’s guardian

“This kid is more talented than master was, with Supreme blood in his veins he might actually be able to overtake the Glacial Emperor’s level. Maybe one day I could really return to the livings...” Pu Yuan muttered after Ye Wei had disappeared, he sighed deeply, clearly displaying that he had unfinished business before he passed away to become what he was now.

“I would love to step outside again, maybe visit my old friends.” Pu Yuan’s hoarse voice sounded, his loneliness echoed in the hallways.

A heavy shower cleansed North Hill Bay, the drops of rain had washed off layers of dusts and dirt off the leaves, the evidence of the recent violent in the area shedded, settled on the ground.

After a sizzling sound shook a few branches meters above ground, a crack ran deep into the earth and a wormhole appeared. Ye Wei quietly walked out of the darkness bounded by the perfectly circular gateway.

“Now where did you go, Lu Qianhuan!?” Ye Wei was completely dry, the raindrops never reached his hair, it was stopped by an invisible force, the water slid off and revealed a spherical shield around him.

‘Starblink Steps!’ Ye Wei’s straightened his fingers, with great precision he dictated the long sequence of specialized runes, a thousand feet wide Qi belt appeared above the trees.

The belt of runic light rapidly grew in length as soon as Ye Wei jumped atop, stretching towards Green Moon City.

‘Hope I am not too late...’ The young Runemaster thought to himself, the rush of Qi carried him towards his hometown at the speed of over ten miles a second. He was timing himself meanwhile, noticed that he was faster than the Lu Qianhuan as he remembered.

The thick rain clouds were just carried away from Green Moon City by the midday breeze.

Thousands had gathered in the center of the City Lord’s castle. Hundreds of long, antique tables and tall chairs were tidily lined up. Each of the furniture pieces was engraved with the city’s crest, they evenly covered large square.

All martial families in Green Moon City except the Ye’s, were invited to a feast hosted by Lu Qianhuan, who sat on the chairman’s seat.

Although in his own premises, Xiao Qingyun, the City Lord was forced to take a seat behind the guest. Next to the City Lord was Gu Qing, the principal of South Star Academy.

Most of the attending families noticed that none of Ye’s were present despite the fact that the Ye Patriarch had lead his family to its recent height and actually deserved a seat in a city gathering.

Lu Qianhuan looked down upon his guests with a spiteful gaze while they were chattering.

“Have you heard the rumors? Lu Qianying died!”

“Seriously? I thought that was just some kind of sick joke! Any idea who killed him? I mean, the man is chubby and kind of clumsy looking, but he is a one-star returned prime Warrior!”

“People are saying Ye Wei killed him, but I am not sure if I should believe it or not.”

“Ye Wei!?” The people involved in the conversation and the eavesdroppers all gasped for air, could not picture the sixteen year old as a killer.

“Haven’t you heard? Ye Wei is one of the God’s Seven since the cultivation tournament in Ning City, I heard he broke through to returned prime level too!”

“A sixteen year old returned prime Warrior? How is that even possible!?”

The martial families’ patriarchs glanced at each other in awe, all of them jealous of the young talent’s achievement, trying not to show their amusement, afraid they might be punished by the victim’s brother.

All of them who heard the news realized that if Ye Wei had truly surpassed the City Lord and South Star’s principal, it would not be long before Green Moon City is ran by the Ye’s.

“Do you think Lu Qianhuan would take his brother’s death lightly?”

“Erm, even the Lu family does influence the government, Ye Wei is now affiliated with the Runemaster Union, he cannot do anything without bringing his family down.”

“Well why do you think Lu Qianhuan invited us then? If Ye Wei is working against the Lu’s should we even be here? I heard from the men we sent to help Lu Qianying that the Lu’s condensed prime Warriors were killed by Ye Wei!”

“The Han’s are out, I care about my family! I’ve sent them on these stupid, dangerous missions for long enough anyway!”

“Yes, that’s a good point!” The patriarchs wishful thinking made them believe Ye Wei was fighting for the city, that they were protected by relation.

“I’ve sent one hundred and twenty-four Warriors to help them

searching whatever they are looking for, I even sent my own son out there!”

All of the patriarchs were not happy with the arrangement. They found it more and more ridiculous that the Lu elder seemed to always have extra requests. Now that they had a chance to gather in one place, they couldn't help but venting out their resentment.

Lu Qianhuan was not in a better mood, he was aware if the family council learned the recent developments around Green Moon City, he will be ordered to make peace with the Ye's and the Runemaster Union.

The risk of the Lu's search being exposed was getting higher as more and more cultivators were getting involved, the Lu's had little chance to cover up if they decided to murder Ye Wei.

Lu Qianhuan was never going to let go, he was a firm believer of the 'eye for an eye' principle, therefore he did not report the latest news to the council. Instead, he called them who he thought obeyed him to a meeting.

The skinny elder stood up, his arms were crossed behind his back, his aggrieved stare seemed to be focused on everyone in the square, his spine-chilling Qi presence was filling the space. Mouths were sealed shut by Lu Qianhuan's slight movement.

“Greetings, everyone! I will be needing three extra condensed prime Warriors from each of Green Moon City's martial families by noon tomorrow, thank you!” Lu Qianhuan's voice struck the palace like thunder, his determined tone shook the thick flooring stones.

Quietness fell again as the elder's voice faded, none of the patriarchs dared to openly challenge the dynasty's and the Runemaster Union's authority. Furthermore, sending condensed prime Warriors to capture a returned prime Warrior did not sound like a good idea to anyone in the gathering.

In a small, remote city, condensed prime Warriors were considered rarities. However the request seemed reasonable to Lu Qianhuan's standards, his rage made him completely blind to this simple fact.

Green Moon City's patriarchs looked nervous, sweating as if they were sitting on cushions made of needles, they were putting their families' future in jeopardy by not willing to risk the lives of the cultivators who were going to build their families future.

All of them were feeling helpless. They simultaneously casted their eyes onto Principal Gu and City Lord Xiao, hoping they would come up with a solution.

Chapter 195 - The Battle of Green Moon City

“Elder Lu, that request is a bit too much. Green Moon City does not officially belong to the Lu’s in any way.” Principal Gu was a man of few words, but he was not going to stay quiet when the city’s future could be forever damaged because of the Lu’s rage. Besides, his professionalism was not going to let him side with an outsider against the strongest cultivator South Star had ever schooled.

Xiao Qingyun also felt the need to give a speech. He was convinced by the Lu’s that he should let the superpower run an operation around the area, and was led by the elder to believe that Lu’s expedition was going to benefit the city. He needed to let the citizens know. Even though he was responsible for the recent mess, he wished nothing more than returning peace to the people.

“Lu Qianhuan, I was authorized by the dynasty itself to take care of this city. The martial families are under my command by law! You will have to stop threatening them, you are basically challenging the dynasty’s reign doing so!” The City Lord grunted and said.

“Say whatever you want, this is the real world where strength is all that counts, the Lu family is well established, and we have royal connections! You should be grateful that you have a chance to serve us!” Lu Qianhuan argued, his gaze was as cold as his voice, his Qi was pressuring the City Lord and the principal.

The returned prime Warrior’s presence was threatening everyone at the square, physically and mentally. The minds of the Green Moon City cultivators were greatly weakened. Lu Qianhuan didn’t care about the price he might have to pay, he just wanted to avenge the chubby man who grew up with him.

Every single one of Green Moon City’s elders and patriarchs willingly bowed to Lu Qianhuan, the cultivation mismatch eliminated their will,

the slim chance they had to retaliate.

After making sure everyone was quiet and obedient, the skinny elder started his speech, “As you might have heard, the Lu’s are not in good terms with the Ye family at the moment. I know Ye Wei is protected by the Runemaster Union, that’s why I don’t wish to harm him, I just need him captured.”

The patriarchs were looking at each other, confused. They all wondered if Lu Qianhuan had gone insane.

“Please, keep in mind that he did commit murder.” Lu Qianhuan could sense the tension, tried his best to cover his rage. “My brother deserves justice as much as Ye Wei deserves protection.”

“If you don’t cooperate I will make sure all of you get punished for conspiring together with the Ye’s” Lu Qianhuan said slowly, staring at Gu Qing and Xiao Qingyun.

The City Lord and the principal then shared a look. Subconsciously, they both understood it was better to agree than to retaliate.

“So be it. People! You heard what elder Lu said.” Xiao Qingyun pretended he was still mind controlled by the elder, turned to the martial families’ leaders.

Seeing that the principal and the City Lord had softened up, Lu Qianhuan grunted scornfully. “The Lu family respects and appreciates, we will reward him or her who locates Ye Wei with ten million silver, three four-star Myst grade mystic arms and ten Myst grade scrolls!”

The news of Master Yi’s returned prime Warrior friend had already spread amongst the martial families before Lu Qianhuan called for the meeting, although nearly all the guests were mesmerize, they could feel that something was not right, that the orders they heard were not beneficial to them in anyway.

“Three days,that’s how long you have! If Ye Wei isn’t delivered here by then, I cannot guarantee your safety.” Lu Qianhuan chuckled, “I’ve heard reports of demons and wild beasts sighting around the area, maybe they

will decided to raid the city, who knows?”

Gu Qing and Xiao Qingyun knew exactly what the elder was implying, they widened their eyes, silently protesting against the ludicrous ultimatum. The two strongest men in Green Moon City wanted to unite the people in the square to stand up against tyranny, but had no way of doing so.

A belt of light in the sky and a shrill sound snapped the guests out of confusion, a small dark figure blinked within the bright arc.

“Lu Qianhuan, don’t waste your time terrorizing my home town, I am right here.” The young Runemaster appeared in the air, in the center of the square. “What are you going to do?”

“You!” Lu Qianhuan’s eyes lit up, his smile turned sinister, “You are not on the guest list but I am glad to see you!”

The elder’s bloodthirsty gaze landed on Ye Wei like darts.

“Take him down!” Lu Qianhuan grunted.

Eighteen of the Lu’s ten-star condensed prime Warriors and over fifty other weaker condensed prime Warriors flew upwards to Ye Wei like a swarm of locusts.

“Why would you walk yourself into a dead end to die!?” Lu De, the ten-star Warrior who previously met the young Runemaster was one of the first Lu’s to recognize the intruder, his lips curled up to make an evil smile, “You are seriously outnumbered!”

“Surround him! Don’t let him escape! He is known to run like a chicken!”

The Lu’s fired their best stances once they were in range, the sky momentarily filled with runes, and sunlight was blocked by the small army.

“You are a talented kid, but you are seriously stupid to return!” Principal looked worryingly at Ye Wei, muttering as he tried to calculate how he could rescue the South Star student.

The City Lord was also analyzing the situation, he too could not believe Ye Wei would walk into the Lu's crew alone. Xiao Qingyun rooted for the Ye's but knew how strong the three-star returned prime Warrior was.

The local patriarchs and their men immediately took cover when the fight broke out. In the chaos, they communicated with each other using voice transmission technique.

“Argh! I feel bad for the Ye's! They could have put the city on the map.”

“The Ye's future is heading to its end! I heard the rest of the Lu's are at the Ye mansion right now, this must have been a trap all along! They are trying to bait Master Yi's returned prime Warrior friend out of the house so they can destroy the mansion!”

“Ye Wei is a fool! I can guarantee you, Lu Qianhuan will not turn Ye Wei over to the authorities! The Runemaster Union was known to have zero tolerance to whoever threatens or even just harasses protected subjects. The Lu's will get into trouble, not the Ye's.”

“Does that mean... We are witnesses?!”

The locals shivered, they realized if the Lu's were going to kill Ye Wei right here, they will also be killed. Although they were jealous and some of them even wanted Ye Wei dead, they'd rather be alive and live in a city where the Ye's dominated than to die.

Led by a three-star returned prime Warrior, the Lu's crew was rather confident. They worked as a team, synchronizing their strikes. They trusted their leader and believed in their strength as a collective more than they feared the sixteen year old.

Ye Wei stared down at the swarm of the Lu's men and their stances, he grunted as he activated the second Supernova Evolution, his cultivation exploded to one-star returned prime level.

“Lu Qianhuan, nice stance, what's its name? The human shield?” Ye Wei shouted comedically riding the light arc, his palm fanned downwards, a Qi wave pressed down at the Lu's men towards the ground.

“Bang!”

The condensed prime Warriors' stance did not hold up against Ye Wei's simple strike. They exploded and thousands of runes scattered in the sky.

Ye Wei used the screen of runes to his advantage, without any of his opponents noticing, he quickly channeled energy from his blood, empowered Starblink Steps and activated Selenic Triple-Primal Sword.

The sharp bolts of Qi accurately landed on his targets, pinning them down, interrupting any attempt at levitation.

Contrary to Lu Qianhuan's expectation, Ye Wei did not hold back. The Lu's men were quickly mutilated, none of them could defend themselves even the slightest.

The young Runemaster had no fear, with Helian Jieyuan's promise, he was ruthlessly expressing his rage and resentment that had been building up ever since he returned to Green Moon City from the tournament.

He turned the number disadvantage around effortlessly, and became the only person levitating in the sky just seconds after the Lu's began their attack.

The City Lord, the principal and the rest of the guest were shocked to see the battle, the teenager's domination confirmed all the rumors regarding the sixteen year old's capabilities.

Subsequently, both Gu Qing and Xiao Qingyun decided to help Ye Wei escape if so he needed, even if it meant sacrificing their lives. They figured out if Lu Qianhuan's revenge was to succeed, the human race would have lost a rare and powerful asset.

"You little prick, even if you are protected by the Runemaster Union my family will make sure you pay a price for what you have done to us!" Lu Qianhuan's face turned pale, his veins bulged up as he witnessed his men dropping from the sky one by one.

Chapter 196 - Secret Weapon

“You are an idiot! I struggled to find an excuse to kill you.” Lu Qianhuan muttered to himself. “But now I don’t even have to cover up your death, I am just defending myself and you’ve somehow lost your mind in a random bloodlust. That’s how the history books are going to read!”

The local patriarchs were stunned by the haunting scene of dead bodies falling from the sky. They shook their heads and looked away, impressed by Ye Wei’s strength but despised by his bold foolishness, in their minds his chances of living through the day were getting slimmer and slimmer as the three-star returned prime Warrior’s rage reached its boiling point.

“Everyone! You are my witnesses! Ye Wei just committed a mass murder!” Lu Qianhuan cold eyes stared up at Ye Wei, his face turned ashen, “Even a Seven New Rune is not excluded from obeying the law!”

‘Thunderbird Seal.’ Lu Qianhuan rapidly activated his powerful Earth stance as he no longer had to play it safe.

Squeaks and rumbles echoed within the walls of the City Lord’s castle while Lu Qianhuan’s dense golden Qi condensed in the sky. The formless golden energy was then sculpted by the elder’s will-force into the shape of a bird of prey.

The thunderbird’s wings spread and flapped vigorously. “Chirp!” The bird’s call drown out the screaming crowd, over ten thousand bolts of lightning bursted out of its eyes as it ascended high up in the air.

A storm was brewing at the City Lord’s castle, the bolts struck simultaneously towards Ye Wei. The three-star returned prime Warrior’s stance planted an apocalyptic image in the locals’ eyes.

“Lu Qianhuan, I am no longer the one you fought.” Ye Wei’s figure faded, swayed within the belt of the runic light.

None of the bolts managed to connect to Ye Wei, the improved Starblink Steps turned him into a phantom. The young Runemaster casually maneuvered left and right, becoming momentarily untouchable.

“What kind of speed boosting stance is that?!” Lu Qianhuan’s eyes widened, his pupils dilated. The elder tried his best to follow Ye Wei’s movements, but he could not pinpoint where his enemy was, instead it just made him dizzy.

Due to its wide area of effect, the Thunderbird stance had always been Lu Qianhuan’s first choice when it came to catching speedy opponents off guard, he felt humiliated by how effortlessly Ye Wei was able to escape from his Earth stance.

‘How could he master an Earth stance in just two days!?’ Lu Qianhuan had no memory of ever seeing Ye Wei using a powerful speed boost, therefore his mind froze when he saw Starblink steps.

“No! I am thinking too much, he must have used a scroll!” The elder muttered to himself, trying to convince himself his opponent was not as strong and talented as his analytical observation suggested otherwise.

“I was careless last time, this time you won’t even have a chance to run!” Lu Qianhuan screamed, “If you do, make sure you don’t run back to your family mansion, you will not like what you are going to see! My men are there and they will destroy the place as soon as I send the order!”

From the tone of Lu Qianhuan’s scream, Ye Wei could tell that the elder’s desire to kill was growing stronger.

The skinny elder was trying to cover his nervousness with rage. He had no way to match Ye Wei’s speed therefore he spat toxic, threatening words.

“Lu Qianhuan, I know what you are trying to do! I will end you before you can call for help!” Ye Wei rolled his eyes and chuckled, his hands turned into a blur, countless runes bursted towards the elder.

‘Third Supernova evolution!’

‘Selenic Reveal!’

Powered by the sudden rush of amplified Qi, the specialized rune sequence condensed and immediately exploded, turning into a mile tall spectral Selenic beast.

“Take that!” Ye Wei finished the last hand seal, giving life to the beast he just created.

In less than a second after the beast opened its eyes, it began to charge. Its three horns pointed at the elder, growing in length and girth, creating a triangular shaped vacuum zone in the storm.

Lu Qianhuan recognized the stance but could not figure out why it was nearly twice as strong as the last time he saw it.

A shadow of concern crossed his face, he could smell death coming from the three horn blades.

‘Low-level Earth stance, Dry Lightning!’ The elder was not quick enough to dodge, he made a quick decision between enduring the numbing recoil of the Dry Lightning and to die in the hands of his brother’s murderer.

‘Now!’ Ye Wei anticipated Lu Qianhuan’s slight hesitation and quickly activated the Falling Star form. His will-force leaked out of his Sentient and formed a light clone. Under the young Runemaster’s control the clone flew towards the elder with a two-star returned prime Warrior’s speed.

The light clone had no feelings and senses, it rushed right toward the runic lightning pillar Lu Qianhuan deployed.

“Bang!”

The clone’s fist reached Lu Qianhuan’s stance before the beast’s horns did, the speed of its punch was repelling air on its path, making the fist strike even faster.

“Bang!”

The flash of light crashed into the lightning pillar, shockwaves spreading quickly from the point of impact. The castle’s walls crumbled

like biscuits, grand structures were destroyed in the matter of seconds.

“This is unbelievable!” Xiao Qingyun screamed, looked at the debris in shock, too late to worry about evacuating the place. The principal was right by his side, carrying as many injured as he could trying to escape from the range of the impact. They were focused on saving as many as they could and did not even have time to look up at the fight.

The lightning pillar, however, was powered by a three-star returned prime Warrior, it could not be stopped by a mere clone.

The fist did not neutralize the elder’s stance and Ye Wei’s clone dispersed after loosening the rune foundation of Dry Lightning, buying a little bit of time and space for the beast to charge to the elder.

“Predictable.” Ye Wei mumbled as the three green glowing horns connected onto Lu Qianhuan’s body. The elder was knocked off balance by his own stance’s recoil and had no possibility to react.

“Pop! Pop! Pop!”

The three ghostly bolts exploded onto Lu Qianhuan’s body, knocking down what’s left of the castle on its trail.

People that managed to escape were looking at the destruction from behind a screen of dust, trying to keep balance while the ground fell apart.

“This kid! He is making Lu family’s elder struggle! It’s not just cultivation level and strength, the stance he used is also extraordinary!” The City Lord spoke to South Star’s principal who stood next to him, behind a runic barrier they just created.

Lu Qianhuan was covered in blood, he clumsily climbed out of the ruins, trembling.

“You little bastard! How dare you?! I will tear you apart!” Lu Qianhuan’s face was scarred and twisted. He channeled his Qi and drew runes after runes inside the cloud of blood mist he was surrounded by.

The cloud of red expanded, a vast murderous intent could be felt by

everyone present.

“What is he trying to do!?” Ye Wei’s palpitating heart told him that whatever technique Lu Qianhuan was going to use next, it would be extremely dangerous.

“Principal Gu, I think we need to do something, or the whole city will be history!” The City Lord said as he tried his best to keep the shield up.

“Ye Wei is still fighting, have some faith, we can’t be both places at the same time!” The principal replied, he was certain that if the shield went down, all of the patriarchs would be suffocated.

The crimson colored energy around Lu Qianhuan was infused with specialized runes that he drew, and transformed into the shape of a large lotus.

“Damn it! Am I too late already?” Ye Wei murmured nervously and shot a peerless Qi sword at the elder.

“Clank!”

The bolt of light was stopped ten feet away from Lu Qianhuan. The blood mist acted as a protective layer, its toughness caused the Qi sword to shatter.

Lu Qianhuan’s hysterical voice, though, broke through the mist. “Imbecile! You are too weak and stupid to stop me! You should be glad that I am putting your stupidity to an end together with this tiny pathetic city! That’s what you get for disrespecting the Lu’s!”

The skinny elder was bloodcrazed: His rage that had been building up since brother’s death exploded all at once.

Ye Wei felt hopeless He could sense that the terrifying energy came from an alien object inside the elder’s body and it was growing at an exponential rate.

Chapter 197 - Demon Lotus

“You are right. Somehow you managed to activate that power inside you. However, if there is anyone here who can stop that from happening, it is me!” Ye Wei said while grabbing the iron talisman he had hanging on his waist all this time.

The talisman emitted a small round ball of energy which rapidly expanded and became an invisible gravitational field, trapping Lu Qianhuan.

The elder’s hysterical laughter became muffled then turned completely silent. His body was held in place with his mouth open. Being suddenly frozen by Ye Wei’s mysterious technique he was utterly shocked.

The energy inside Lu Qianhuan stopped flowing and the red mist around him quickly dispersed.

“Die!” Ye Wei yelled as he fired thirty-six Qi swords all at once, aimed at the elder’s chest.

Ye Wei used the talisman even knowing that charging it up again would be difficult and time consuming. However, the fearsome energy he felt in the blood mist made this an easy decision.

“Bang!”

The merged Qi swords explosively penetrated the elder’s body. Although frozen, Lu Qianhuan could still feel pain, and his face turned pale as the left side of his chest burst open.

‘B*stard!! You have no idea what you’ve done!...’ Lu Qianhuan thought to himself as the talisman’s effect start to fade.

“Hahaha! The whole city will now perish because of you, Ye Wei!” Lu Qianhuan screamed as he slowly stood up. His eyes were dim and lifeless, his rib cage empty.

Ye Wei gasped for air as he witnessed the terrifying sight. Shivering in fear, he took a few steps back.

The young Runemaster, was completely surprised, while Lu Qianhuan seemed to be at peace, welcomed his death.

After his breakthrough to the returned prime level, the elder decided to explore one of the three forbidden grounds. The royals had no policies stopping people from entering the three areas, but it was known to the dynasty that going to these areas was just asking for death. Regardless, many cultivators were still confident enough to dive into the danger zones in the hopes of finding rare treasures.

The Bloodtear Isles were a conglomeration of desert islands scattered within the inland sea, and this elder was one of the few who had managed to survive the savagery of those islands and lived to tell his tale.

On one of the islands, Lu Qianhuan caught a rare blood parasite. Driven crazy by the excruciating pain, he bore his own heart out hoping to stop the agony. Just when he was about to die from blood loss, a carnivorous demonic lotus took him by surprise and consumed his heart.

The blood lotus then settled into the elder's body using him as a host to harvest his Qi. In return, it incorporated itself into his circulatory system and kept him alive.

Not only did Lu Qianhuan learn to use the demonic energy of the lotus to improve his cultivation speed, he was also inspired by it to create the Bloodshadow stance.

Before his travels, him and his brother had just broke through in a long duo cultivation training session. The Lu brothers were similar in every way, from appearance, cultivation talent, all the way to their temper. But since Lu Qianhuan's return, he had lost weight and his cultivation speed improved drastically. While, on the other hand, his brother remained a one-star returned prime Warrior, he had broken through twice in just two years.

The elder's achievement did not go unnoticed by the Lu's council. The commanders position for the Drakehead mission was actually a reward.

It was the patriarch's way to show his appreciation and approval.

Lu Qianhuan never thought he would be pushed so far, and knowing he was passed the point of no return, he decided to use the destructive energy that had been accumulating in the lotus to destroy the young Runemaster and the city that ruined his future.

With his last breath he injected his remaining Qi into the lotus, releasing it from his chest.

"Is it over?" Ye Wei could no longer feel any signs of life from Lu Qianhuan but he hesitated to go closer and check as the blood mist was still lingering.

The lotus quietly levitated within the mist, and not even Ye Wei could sense its existence. But even so, Ye Wei did not let his guard down. He vigilantly stared at the red cloud expecting something to happen.

"Lu Qianhuan is dead." Principal Gu said also looking at the red cloud. He was greatly shocked and standing still.

"How is this possible!?" The City Lord said doubting his senses. He could not believe the elder had died just like that. "Lu Qianhuan was a three-star returned prime Warrior!"

After coming to their senses, the audience also realized what had just happened, and they looked at Ye Wei in disbelief.

In a city where the top cultivators were not any stronger than the ten-star condensed prime level, the defeat of a three-star returned prime Warrior was something they could never fathom they would see. After a brief moment of shock, they started talking energetically.

"The times are changing! With a youngster like this, Green Moon City will be ran by the Ye's from now on!"

"Interesting! Exactly a century ago the Ye's were strong, and even the City Lord had to give them face I heard."

"Ha, this is karma! Us, Mo's, have always kept a good relationship with the Ye's!"

As for the patriarchs that had poor relationship with the Ye family, they shared a devious look. They all wished that the Lu's would not take the death of two elders and hundreds of their condensed prime Warriors lightly even if seeking revenge would mean angering the royals and the Runemaster Union. Some of them were already thinking about how they should send their quickest men to the state's capital to explain the situation so the Lu's would react immediately.

As the residual energy from the violent battle began to die down, the patriarchs all turned away, chatting. As the lotus was slowly absorbing the scattered runes and the Qi close by, it revealed itself, and Ye Wei was the only person who noticed its presence.

'What is that?' The young Runemaster said in his head while frowning and narrowing his eyes.

'Kid, that is a demonic lotus...' The sinister sounding, Black Scale Progenitor's hoarse mutter echoed in Ye Wei's mind.

'And...?!' The progenitor's tone made Ye Wei feel extremely uncomfortable.

'And... Hahaha! You will all be very dead soon! The lotus will explode when it is fully charged, and this one is by no means small! Lu Qianhuan must have fed it well!' The progenitor replied laughing at Ye Wei's bad luck. 'You don't stand a chance! You are nowhere near strong enough to stop it nor quick enough to outrun it! You will become dust, and I, my friend, will be quite safe inside this scale.'

'Does it mean the explosion will affect the city?!' A shiver of pure terror traveled down Ye Wei's spine.

He could not just stand and watch. He could not just leave his family and the citizen of Green Moon City here to die. The hair on his back rose as he activated Starblink Steps and took a courageous step forward in the lotus' direction.

The young Runemaster reached the demonic plant in less than a second and retrieved it with a chain made from Qi. He unloaded a vast amount of his amplified energy into the runes he was riding, and turned

around flying away from the city.

‘Hahaha! Kid, you should be running away from it, not with it!’ The progenitor’s sadistic laugh sounded in Ye Wei’s mind. ‘I guess it doesn’t really matter, it’s too late! You will die either way and the city will be destroyed!’

“Crack!”

The lotus suddenly bloomed. The first layer of its nine petals fell, unleashing a terrifying energy wave.

“Whoop!” Ye Wei was just a meter away from the lotus and was immediately swept off his feet by the tsunami-like energy wave. He tasted rustiness in his mouth as he coughed up a mouthful of blood while flying backwards for miles like a stringless kite.

“Zoom! Zoom! Zoom!”

The lotus slowly began to spin. Its spinning was accelerating in time with the waves it was producing. Within a breath’s time, the lotus’ energy had engulfed the whole city within seconds.

“What’s going on!?” Gu Qing and Xiao Qingyun tried to activate the shield again but the red mist’s energy was pressuring them so much that their dantians were unable to flow with Qi.

“Argh!”

The pressure quickly escalated, and the City Lord and the Principal fell to the ground together with the rest of the citizens, shaking on the floor.

“No!” Ye Wei tried to get closer to the lotus. Gritting his teeth, he ignored his injuries and the pain he was enduring, but despite his effort, he could not move his body more than an inch.

‘Hahaha! Just relax! It won’t be long now.’ The progenitor was still laughing maniacally. ‘Be happy, at least you will not die alone!’

Every living soul in the city felt the impact, thinking it was a foreshock to an earthquake.

“That was not natural!” Master Yi could feel the Qi disturbance from

the Ye's mansion, and looked towards the City Lord's castle with a flash of fear in his eyes.

Even over thirty miles away from the lotus, Master Yi's breathing was becoming irregular as he was already being affected by it.

"No, definitely not!" The Runemaster's three-star returned prime Warrior friend could also feel it. His Qi flow was drastically weakened.

The energy waves were growing stronger and stronger, the city was shaking more vigorously as houses and other building were beginning to fall apart!

Chapter 198 - Greater Transmutation Array

‘This has to go!’ Ye Wei, being closest to the lotus, could tell that it was far from over.

‘Light clone!’

‘Peerless Sword Qi’

The young Runemaster refused to be a victim and let the city’s population of over a million perish because of a madman’s pride.

With complete focus and determination, Ye Wei ignored his body’s limits and channeled all of his remaining energy. With the Qi sword as a drill and his clone as protection, he recklessly penetrated through wave after wave of radiating energy, towards the lotus.

‘Kid, just give up! All is already lost! The explosion will wipe everything out, and a radius wider than five hundred miles will be flat ground in moments!’ The progenitor laughed, seemingly looking forward to the disaster.

Ye Wei ignore every word he heard and kept his eyes focused on the blooming lotus.

‘Are you stupid? You might even be able to survive if you used your speed to run in the opposite direction.’ The progenitor genuinely could not understand the young Runemaster’s actions.

“Shut up!” Ye Wei squeezed the words out of his bleeding lips. Even with his Qi sword and his clone negating the impact, his skin was cracking and tearing.

Just seconds of trying to push himself through the energy waves covered him in blood.

“Not here. Not here. Not her...” Ye Wei’s mumbles became more and more inaudible. All he could feel was pain. His will was what kept him

going, although his body was telling him to it couldn't continue.

“Chook!”

The fierce energy waves were denser close to lotus, and this caused his Qi sword to break apart, melted and turned into a paste texture.

Ye Wei was now only ten feet away, but every inch forward was the greatest struggle he had ever faced.

‘Maybe, just maybe I will be able to suppress the lotus with the Mystic Mount's power in my Sentient...’ Ye Wei thought to himself, as he watched his clone crumble.

‘Three feet!’

Ye Wei's body was now under more than twice the pressure without the clone relieving the energy waves. Ye Wei's skin was burning and his muscles were tearing, even strengthened by the Supernova runes his bones were beginning to crack.

While his body was becoming weaker and falling apart, his gaze became sharper. His Supreme blood was activated by the pressure and heat. The lotus' energy was destroying his body while his blood repaired it at a rapid rate.

The repeated destruction and rebuilding was the most pain Ye Wei had ever felt. The slicing and destruction had numbed his senses, and he could not feel his body at points, however, his body was becoming stronger from the process.

“Argh!” With his inherited power, Ye Wei screamed and slowly overcame the distance between himself and the lotus.

At the Drakehead, Helian Jieyuan opened his eyes, disturbed. He stood up and lifted his hand, pointing his palm at Green Moon City.

“This reading is off the charts! How could a god's prime level demon even get into the city without anyone noticing!?” Helian Jieyuan's twisted facial expression showed his panic. “How dare they ignore the

holy treaty!’

The royal’s figure turned into a blur, disappearing swiftly and quietly.

Like all powerful cultivators, the royal family’s Grand Elder was extremely prideful. He very seldom got himself involved in disputes between parties he thought was below him. Helian Jieyuan was almost insulted by the outburst that disturbed his training.

Ye Wei’s shaky right hand was no longer covered by skin, but that did not stop him from reaching and attempting to grab the lotus.

“Tzss!”

The scalded muscles on his fingers was peeling off by the time he touched the demonic plant, and all five of his fingers were just bones.

“Argh!” The remaining muscles on Ye Wei’s face twitched involuntarily as he used his will-force to clench his fingers onto the lotus. The moment he gripped it, he became light, able to use some of the lotus’ energy. With the extra energy, he sped upwards while trying to crush the flower with his will-force and Qi.

“This is it!” Ye Wei said while above several layers of clouds. He could feel the pulsating lotus’ energy had stopped intensifying.

Even with Supreme blood in his veins repairing at an outrageous speed, Ye Wei was running out of Qi and will-force. But not knowing exactly how strong the explosion was going to be, he decided to just keep flying upwards for as long as he had the energy to.

“Tatatata!”

The demonic lotus vigorously rattled against Ye Wei’s fleshless hands, emitting a red glowing energy.

“Is it trendy these days to be so reckless? Doesn’t school teach kids to value their lives anymore?” Just as the energy started expanding, a spatial tear opened in the sky and a white-bearded man suddenly appeared next to Ye Wei.

“It’s you...” Ye Wei was relieved to see Helian Jieyuan. As he was already past his body’s limit, and seeing that help had arrived, he passed out from fatigue.

“This kid was ready to sacrifice his life for the city... This level of selflessness is even more impressive than his talent for cultivation. It seems I have indeed kept my eyes on the right person!” The bearded royal quickly caught Ye Wei. With admiration, he gleefully looked at the unconscious youngster in his arm.

Before this incident, the grand elder saw the talent in Ye Wei and recruited the young Runemaster because of his respect for the Glacial Emperor. Now though, he truly appreciated Ye Wei’s temperament and spirit; he knew he would be a future powerhouse.

“Bang!”

The demonic lotus unleashed its destructive power, but the explosion had be confined and stayed the same size, held and contained by Helian Jieyuan’s Qi.

“Zoom!”

The aura around the royal Grand Elder glowed rose golden as he put his specialized runes into it transforming it into one-rune-thick screen.

‘Of course it’s a demonic lotus! What was I thinking? The demons wouldn’t achieve anything if they started a war here...’ Helian Jieyuan untightened his frown and swiped his arms wrapping Ye Wei in a golden runic weave.

‘Greater Transmutation Array!’ With just a few hand seals, the Grand Elder channeled the primal energy around him, turning nature’s power into his own. It perfectly melded with his runes and the energy shined and flowed like molten glass.

Using less than a hundredth of a second, Helian Jieyuan fluidly made nine more hand seals. The energy around him stretched into a long, thin thread and knitted itself into a complex array.

The array blasted open a dark rift in the sky.

“Bang!” The noise was not proportion to the miniature explosion, the crack swallowed the energy of the lotus.

The crack then spat out a cube of light, and contained inside was the lotus. With only two seconds, the Grand Elder took control of the whole situation.

Helian Jieyuan levitated peacefully above the clouds while looking at the lotus and thought to himself. ‘If it were a full bloom, even I wouldn’t be able to control it.’

“The Prime Dragon Ridge technically belongs to the Ye’s... I should pay them back somehow.’ The Grand Elder muttered, looking at the runic weave with a smile on his face. “This kid is a Ye and the Glacial Emperor’s inheritor, he has great temperament too.”

“The lotus goes to you then! And we are even!” Helian Jieyuan shook his head, and managed to fight his urges to claim this rare plant as his own. He flicked his finger, and the lotus immediately melted into Ye Wei’s shoulder.

“How did you not die from this...?” The Grand Elder finally had the time to take a closer look at Ye Wei’s injuries, and he frowned while sighing. After flicking his sleeves, the old and the youngster disappeared.

The news of Ye Wei’s stand against the Lu’s, and his victory over Lu Qianhuan, spread across the city within the day. Two days after that devastating battle, the whole state was aware of what happened at Green Moon City.

Martial families within the state were concerned, and all showed interest in how the Lu’s reacted to the elder’s death. Even the Green Army and the Runemaster Union were paying attention to this new development.

Chapter 199 - Lu

At the Rockblade mountains just outside Zhoutian Sword School, Jian Chen sat cultivating on one of the sword-shaped peaks.

His Qi was saturating under the clouds in the shape of swords, gliding around like eagles

Jian Chen opened his eyes when a pigeon called, he opened his hand as the bird released the small scroll it carried. He widened his eyes after reading the text, clenched onto and crumbled the paper.

“For the past three months I have been training day and night just to improve my sword techniques and refine my Bloodmoon Assassination Sword, but I guess that does not give me the right to fight you again.” Jian Chen’s Sword Qi accelerated as he became more emotional.

“I will catch up with you, the next time when I have the chance to challenge you I will be the victor!” His competitiveness and thirst for power became his drive. Jian Chen decided that Ye Wei was his worthy rival. The stronger his rival became, the more motivated he was.

Apart from the low-profile, Lin’s the other two royal families were recruiting youngsters to become a part of their forces.

Jian Chen had been famous and watched by many powerful people since he became a God’s Seven, he had recently been recruited by the Helian’s but since he cared more about the art of sword than anything else, he didn’t bother replying.

‘If I continue to stay in my own head, I will never overtake Ye Wei...’ The fifteen year old closed his eyes and took a deep breath, ‘I shall take the offer!’

Within the thirty-six outskirt cities region, Ye Wei’s previous opponents

at the tournament were all shocked to hear the news, most of them were the strongest cultivator from their own cities. They could not believe that it only took three months of cultivating for Ye Wei, who had the strength of a ten-star condensed prime Warrior, to become strong enough to defeat a three-star returned prime Warrior.

After seeing Ye Wei defeating Qi Xiu from Polaris, Shi Huntian from Tri-Solar and single-handedly tamed Galaxy Academy's line-up, a lot of the cultivators and citizens from the region were excited about the rising star. When they heard the news, they were proud and ecstatic, believing that Ye Wei would soon rise to become god's prime Warrior.

As Ye Wei was now a cultivator comparable to the City Lord of Ning City, the region's leader, The Green Army had now decided to not only see Ye Wei as a talent, but also a potential threat.

To the officials and established powers within the region the speed Ye Wei was growing seemed unnatural, it unavoidably raised concerns and disturbed the balance of powers. The families closer to the Army and the Runemaster Union had clearly gained popularity among the influentials.

At Ning City, the City Lord was discussing recent affairs with his strategists, inevitably the topic of Ye Wei came up.

"I like that kid, back at the tournament he was fighting like a peak ten-star condensed prime Warrior. That was only three months ago. I don't think he will do anything against me, I saved his life in the end." City Lord Chen Yuan expressed casually, felling slightly nostalgic about the tournament.

"But, Sir, the man he killed is a three-star returned prime Warrior who had spent time cultivating in one of the forbidden areas and survived!" The City Lord's deputy was not as trusting as he didn't fight alongside Ye Wei.

"If I say it's fine, then it is. Rumors had it that he did what he had to, for his family and his city, if we should read anything out of the information we gathered, Ye Wei should be a trustworthy ally, not the

opposite.” The City Lord explained to his man in a relaxed tone. “The Lu’s on the other hand, we may have to keep an eye on.”

“Are you sure, Sir? This kid will most probably become a god’s prime Warrior or even a Supreme! If we ever have a chance to deal with him, it will be now, when from what we’ve gathered, he is still injured.”

“Yes, I am sure. Keep the Ye’s close, help them if they need it.” Chen Yuan replied sincerely. “I’d rather him become a Supreme than any other youngsters I saw fighting in the tournament!”

Like the region’s capital, many martial families had taken the same approach towards the Ye’s treating the Ye family like celebrity, royalties.

The gates of the Ye mansion had become busy again, teaming with gift-bearing messengers. However, the Ye’s did not have the time for their guests, they were panicking over the missing young Runemaster, arranging search groups to cover the city and the surrounding areas.

On the edge of the Lu’s land at Qing State’s capital.

At the throat of a giant volcano sat a majestic palace, its white exterior was lit red by the radiating magma. The walls did not stop the heat and the raging flame from the outside, in the middle of the burning hall, a white-haired and bearded old man was sitting with crossed legs, cultivating on top of a large straw cushion.

The old man’s graceful figure flickered and crackled, periodically fading and materializing.

According to rumors, the Lu Patriarch was an eight-star returned prime Warrior, but he hadn’t fought in public in decades, his actual cultivation was a mystery.

“Granddad!” A stern-faced youngster appeared in thin air before the palace’s gate, a blurry white glare coated his body, and his white robe, insulating the lethal heat.

Lu Fan was the most talented young cultivator that had been born into

the Lu family in the recent centuries, at the age of twenty-two, his five-star returned prime level cultivation placed him amongst the dynasty's elites.

After the Green Moon City incidence, the Lu elders held different opinions as of how they should react, while some insisted they should retaliate, some of them would like the family to officially apologize to the Ye's, the Green Army and the Runemaster Union.

Without an unanimous decision, the board had no choice but bring the matter to their leader and Lu Fan was the only person the Lu Patriarch would see in person.

"Hey, come on in!" The old man's gentle but sturdy voice echoed the hall, the gates slowly swung opened automatically. He opened his eyes, seemed happy to see his grandson. "What's the matter?"

"Elder Qianhuan and half a hundred of our condensed prime Warriors were killed in Green Moon City by a kid called Ye Wei, the council could not agree on how the family should react and here I am, asking for your opinion." Lu Fan respectfully looked towards the center of the burning hall.

"Who is this Ye Wei then?" The elder's voice was unemotional, but his eyes lit up. Feeling offended but excited, the empire he build have not been challenged since more than decades ago.

"Ye Wei, from the Green Moon City's Ye's. Best young cultivator of the God's Seven, one of the seven New Runes, as you can already guess, he has the power to defeat a three-star returned prime Warrior." Lu Fan spoke slowly to make sure the patriarch got every bit of the information.

"Okay that sounds interesting." The Lu Patriarch muttered, seemed to be impressed, moved. "So in terms of talent, he is not worse than you. I get the picture now."

"That would be the case. From what we can gather, the kid was just a condensed prime Warrior less than three months ago." Lu Fan took a deep breath and continued, "and that's the reason we believe that he learned the Drakehead's location."

“The Drakehead?” The patriarch rose his brows.

“And also...” A cyan coloured flame appeared, the fire transformed into the shape of a humanoid in front of Lu Fan, “I have just mastered this!”

“Cyan Clone!” The patriarch appeared not to be interested, just nodded and vaguely smiled, “not bad considering you are just twenty-two! You might even be able to hold your ground in the ring against the Head Elder. Speaking of whom, is he still at six-star returned prime level?”

“Yea granddad.” Lu Fan nodded, his fire clone shrank and returned into his body. He looked at the patriarch with an intense gaze and continued, “do you think I should take care of Ye Wei myself then?”

“He sounds like a dangerous character if I am honest.” The smile on the patriarch’s face vanished and his tone became harsh and cold. “It’s a shame he was not born into a powerful family.”

The Lu Patriarch shook his head as he made the decision. “I will send someone else to do the job, we can’t tolerate this kind of disrespect as much as we can’t put you at risk. This can get complicated.”

“Are you sure? He is one of the Seven New Runes.” Lu Fan tried as hard as he could to sound calm, “I am guessing you have already thought about how to deal with the Union then?”

“The Seven is just a silly title and the Qing state Union is just a shell, it has no real authority.” The patriarch grunted and answered. “We are not amateurs, we will not leave traces that leads the kill to us!”

“Okay, I understand!” Lu Fan nodded and backed to the exit. Just as he was about to leave, a flowing purple sigil appeared in the hall.

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The Sigil glowed in a noble shade of lilac.

"Helians!?" The patriarch furiously leaped forth from his seat and grabbed it as it twinkled.

His hand clenched into a fist and crushed the sigil into pieces, the message it carried was directly injected into his Sentient.

The rage he felt twisted his face and bulged up the veins on his arms.

"Little Fan, tell the council not to touch the Ye family, there will be consequence if just one hair on Ye Wei's head is missing. Anyone who does anything to the Ye's will be executed." The old man's long white brows arched up, his voice had a sizzling undertone.

Lu Fan's was shocked to hear the harsh, contradicting order, looking at the patriarch in frustration.

"Your wish is our command." The youngster nodded reluctantly, dared not reason with the enraged old man.

"You should think about training in the field from now on. You should be able to handle most missions we have available now that you mastered the fire clone technique." The Patriarch flicked his finger and shot a golden fire bolt at Lu Fan's forehead. "Pay the Huyan's a visit, bring them all the information we have on the Drakehead. Show them the mark on your forehead and they will know I sent you."

"Understood!" Lu Fan touched his forehead and bowed respectfully. He was doubtful about the decision but he didn't show it. He bowed again as he walked out of the gate.

"Helian! The Lu's can't touch you but we know people who can!" The Patriarch murmured as soon as he was alone again, "We will be blameless if the Huyan gets rid of Ye Wei..."

The elder chuckled grievously, drowning in vengeful thoughts.

Ye Wei was lying unconscious in the center of the underwater palace at the Drakehead. His eyes were shut, his organs, bones, muscles and skin were heavily damaged, destroyed in the explosion. If it wasn't for the Supreme blood in his veins, he would have died together with Lu Qianhuan.

“You dumb little kid, didn't they teach you to think before you act!? You could have notified me, Lu Qianhuan was just a three-star returned prime Warrior, I could have dealt with him even before he pulls off the suicidal move.” The Helian Grand Elder shook his head while looking at Ye Wei.

The corrosive energy of the lotus would have killed most ordinary folks, and it was still lingering on Ye Wei even it had been days since the explosion.

“He is lucky to be a Ye. His blood is continuously healing him.” Helian Jieyuan kept his hands on Ye Wei's back, supporting the young Runemaster's vitals with his own Qi.

“Just a bit longer. His blood should neutralized the residue toxicity.” Helian Jieyuan had no way to counter the lotus' energy, the only thing he could do was supporting.

“He is going to gain more than he lost.” Helian Jieyuan could visualized the Qi flow in Ye Wei's body, could clearly see that the youngster's Qi was compressing, that the Qi flow was strengthening the youngster's body as it was being repaired.”

“Without the lotus' stimulation his blood will not even be activated. When he eventually wakes up, he will be a lot stronger...” The royal sighed and muttered. “Just sixteen but already an eight-star condensed prime Warrior, two-star returned prime level clone and he has Supreme blood in his veins.”

“He is also sitting on the Glacial Emperor's knowledge and treasures. I

wonder what I would have become if I was as lucky as he is. Hahaha!” Helian Jieyuan was feeling slightly jealous but understood Ye Wei’s rise will be for the greater good.

The healing power of the Supreme Blood continuously worked against the lotus’ toxicity, the runes in Ye Wei’s blood were slowly catching up with the rate his body was decaying.

Although Ye Wei was not practising a body strengthening stance, his physical form was enhanced by abnormally rapid healing process, his body strength was now comparable to even the strongest opponents he fought.

In the Grand Elder’s eyes, it was only the matter of time before Ye Wei reached his own cultivation level.

‘I’ve wasted enough time.’ Helian Jieyuan thought to himself as he sat himself down and focused on his own body.

Supreme Yu Palace was the Drakehead’s core, being in the sacred halls meant that Ye Wei’s Qi flow was sped up more than a hundred times its normal speed. However, the source of the freezing energy that could turn even Ye Wei to a piece of solid ice if it was not for Helian Jieyuan’s aid.

Three days had passed in the blink of an eye. Ye Wei finally woke up after the lotus’ toxicity was completely digested by the power in his blood.

“My body...” Ye Wei gently clenched his fist, the energetic strength woke him up.

“What happened to me!?” He exclaimed in disbelief. Not only was he prepared to die for the city, he was certain that his life actually ended when he lost consciousness.

Ye Wei froze in confusion, his mind was absolutely blank.

“Kid, are you awake or still dreaming?” Helian Jieyuan stood up and walked towards Ye Wei with a smile on his face.

“That’s it! It was you!” The royal Grand Elder was the missing

centerpiece of Ye Wei's memory, the young Runemaster had a sudden moment of clarity. "You appeared out of nowhere right before the explosion!"

Ye Wei looked gratefully at Helian Jieyuan and thought, 'You saved my life, healed my injuries and strengthened my body...'

"I owe you too much!" Ye Wei went on his knees and thankfully nodded. "I will dedicate my life to the Helians. If you need me to do anything just let me know and I will get it done or die trying!"

"Kid, you can take that back for now. I stopped the lotus exploding, but I did not stop the lotus from killing you." Helian Jieyuan said laughingly. "Don't just thank me for you being alive. You lived and your body strengthened to one-star returned prime level because of the Supreme blood in you."

The royal wore a cryptic smile on his face, amused by how confused and clueless Ye Wei actually was.

"Supreme blood?" Ye Wei did not get much out of Helian Jieyuan's vague words, he therefore closed his eyes, channeled his will-force to investigate his body's state.

The young Runemaster could feel the small, powerful portion of his blood was resting in his Sentient, and that quite a large sum of runes were detaching from the pool of golden fluid.

The runes Ye Wei could feel were separated from the Supreme blood during the healing process, after absorbing the toxins.

'I have always suspected there is a stance somewhere in those ten thousand runes in that little pool of blood...' Ye Wei closed his eyes and felt the connection between the loose runes, 'I can already see how my theory can be true!'

'Supreme Ye Yu must have left the runes in his blood so the Ye's could someday rediscover it!' The young Runemaster felt euphoric, like a child who figured out how to run for the first time in his life. 'It can't be just any stance if it's hidden so well...'

“That doesn’t make me any less grateful! I would have been killed if you didn’t intervene!” Ye Wei looked at Helian Jieyuan right in the eyes and said.

The Grand Elder smiled and nodded, greatly appreciated Ye Wei’s humbleness and modesty at such young age.

“Sir, I can feel a powerful stance in my blood. Would you mind watching over me in case my Qi flow gets out of control?”

“Of course.” Helian Jieyuan nodded and sat down to cultivate, filling the room with his will-force so he could monitor Ye Wei while focused on his own training.

Ye Wei also crossed his legs and sat down to study the runes further.

“This is a spectacular body enhancement stance!” the young Runemaster’s will-force was soon able to rearrange the runes in his blood into a more refined structure.

To become a sage, one must transcend their life energy to a higher level through a Heaven stance they created, the failure of the Supreme transcendence will cause the cultivator’s soul to slowly disintegrate in the course of ten years.

The Eternal Star was a Sky stance created by Supreme Ye Yu for the transcendence, after the failure he spent the rest of his life to infuse the runes of the stance to his eldest son’s blood.

As the saying goes, Supreme reigns millennium. Although didn’t manage to live a thousand years like Supremes should, Ye Yu was able to invent a method to store a portion of his power and cipher his stance creations in blood.